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THE SELEUCID, PARTHIAN AND SASANIAN PERIODS

edited by

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Efforts have been made to achieve a measure of consistency in the transcription of Iranian words and proper names. However, ambiguities in the spelling and pronunciation of Middle-Iranian words make complete consistency neither possible nor desirable. In some cases different spellings represent different readings or opinions (e.g. Kartīr/Kerdīr/Kirtēr); in others variant forms are sufficiently current to warrant non-interference (e.g. Hormazd/Hormizd); yet in others different spellings are dictated by the period or the context (e.g. Ahura Mazda/Ohrmazd/Hormizd, Artaxšēr/Ardashīr, Stakhr/Iṣṭakhr, x^{v}*arənah*/x^{w}*arra*/*farrah*). Therefore a number of alternative spellings have been allowed. In a few cases the difference stems from the use of classical or anglicized forms (e.g. Chorasmia/Khwārazm, Chosroes/Khusrau, Būshahr/Bushire). It is also worth adding a note on the transliteration of Russian (which turns up primarily in the citration of sources). With manuscripts coming in over a number of years, and from scholars in various disciplines, writing their original contributions in several different languages, it seemed neither prudent nor practicable to impose a single system of transliteration.

Each Part of the Volume is preceded by a short editorial note to place the chapters of that Part in perspective. Cross references are used in the footnotes to indicate or coordinate discussions of the same subject in different contexts, or to point out divergent views [normally in square brackets].

The bibliography to each chapter serves both to provide the details of the works referred to in the footnotes and to bring together a comprehensive selection of publications for the benefit of researchers.

A general review and synthesis of the topics treated in the volume is attempted in the Introduction.

Invitations to contributors began to go out more than ten years ago. Whereas some chapters were received as late as 1980 a few were written in the early seventies and the majority in the middle seventies. Although the authors have been able to check the proofs in the period 1977–80 and bring the bibliographies generally up to date and even make use of recent publications, the reader should bear in mind that the occasional absence of some recent works in the bibliographies cannot reflect on the diligence of the authors but is attributable to the long process that

was inevitably involved in the preparation of a volume of this kind.

The Editor wishes to acknowledge with thanks the assistance he has received from a number of colleagues. Sir Harold Bailey has generously helped with much useful information and bibliographical data; Edith Porada kindly prepared for publication the chapter on Parthian art by the late Daniel Schlumberger, and Trudy S. Kawami compiled the bibliography for it; Ilya Gershevitch revised the translation of the late Jean de Menasce's chapter on Zoroastrian literature and Philip Gignoux drafted the bibliography; Mary Boyce reviewed the chapters on the National History and Mazdakism and made valuable suggestions. Peter Burbidge of the Cambridge University Press provided the much-needed drive for the completion of the volume.

The Editor is especially grateful to his friend Hubert Darke, the Editorial Secretary, who supervised the preparation of the illustrations and maps, checked a great many bibliographical items, and helped with the correction of proofs with characteristic care and exemplary dedication; in fact his unfailing readiness to assist in all aspects of the editorial function proved essential. The Editor is further indebted to his friends Ilya Gershevitch, Mary Boyce and Prudence Harper for reading the Introduction and offering helpful criticism.

Cordial thanks are due to all the contributors to the volume for their forbearance with the long process of editing and publication.

E.Y.

Columbia University
January 1982

INTRODUCTION

This volume encompasses a time span of about one thousand years, from the emergence of the Seleucid empire in 312 B.C. to the collapse of the Sasanian empire in A.D. 651. The period saw the rise and fall of three mighty dynasties, the Seleucids, the Arsacids, and the Sasanians, as well as the formation of a number of states and empires to the east, notably the Greco-Bactrian kingdom and the Kushan empire. In the religious sphere the millennium witnessed the expansion of gnostic tendencies in western Iran and Mesopotamia, culminating in the appearance and spread of Manichaeism; the consolidation of Zoroastrianism under the Sasanians as an authoritarian state Church; and the birth and suppression of the egalitarian movement of the Mazdakites. In more general terms, the era saw the ascendency and demise of Hellenism in Iran; the development of a distinct Iranian art-style with wide impact; the evolution of a national saga; the development of local systems of writing in the major provinces; and finally, the shaping of an administrative system and court procedures which were to play an important role in the 'Abbasid caliphate and its eastern vassal states.

THE HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, seized Babylon in 312 B.C. and forged a large empire which included most of western Asia. The eastern provinces of the empire, however, where the Parthians, Bactrians, Sogdians and Chorasmians lived, did not remain long in the possession of the Seleucids, slipping away from their hold when the satrapies of Bactria and Parthia aspired to sovereignty. The defection in 246 B.C. of Diodotus, satrap of Bactria, marked the beginning of a new dynasty, the Greco-Bactrian, which gradually expanded southward, occupying the Kabul valley, the Peshawar region, and Taxila in the Punjab. Eventually this led to the formation of other dynasties with a southward bent – the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian. They controlled Afghanistan, northwestern India, and sometimes beyond, before the Kushāns, leading some powerful Saka tribes, supplanted them in the 1st century A.D.[1]

[1] The date and the ethnic identity of the Kushan kings is controversial; see pp. 197ff. for a full discussion. (Chapter and page numbers mentioned in these notes without specifications refer to chapters and pages in the present volume; page numbers in brackets refer to the bibliography.)

In 238 B.C.,[1] or possibly ten years earlier, the Parni, a tribe of the Dahae confederacy in Transoxiana, invaded Parthia and established the Arsacid dynasty, which was to rule in Iran for some 500 years. Having first challenged the Seleucid power in Parthia and Hyrcania, the Arsacids pressed westward eventually capturing Babylon under Mithradates I in 141 B.C. and turning their kingdom into an empire; the Seleucids were forced to retreat to Syria and Asia Minor.

The Seleucid rule over the western Iranian territories, then, lasted some 170 years, and over eastern Iran less than 70. However, the successor Greek dynasties in the east, and the Greek colonies which were settled in Alexandrias, Antiochias and other widely established cities, remained an instrument of Hellenization long after the Seleucid sovereignty had been eclipsed in Iran.

In the end the vigour and vitality of the Arsacids declined and their empire deteriorated into a number of bickering kingdoms, thus exposing the country to humiliating defeats at the hands of Roman emperors. A new force then gathered and took shape in Persis, giving rise to the Sasanian dynasty, bent on restoring the land to its erstwhile power and prestige. Ardashīr I, the founder of this dynasty, defeated his Arsacid overlord *c.* A.D. 224 and united the country under his banner. True to his aspirations, he invaded the Roman eastern provinces in 230 and again in 238, and conquered the fortified cities of Nisibis, Carrhae and Hatra. His able son Shāpūr I, heading an army whose confidence had been reinforced and morale strengthened, continued his father's drive east and west. He conquered new territories and overthrew the Romans in cities of Syria and Asia Minor, even taking the emperor Valerian prisoner in 259. Under this monarch the Sasanian empire reached its greatest extent, stretching, according to Shāpūr's great inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam, from Central Asia and Chinese Turkistan to the Indus valley and from Anatolia and Caucasia to the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

Some four hundred years after the rise of Ardashīr to power, Khusrau II Parvēz conquered Jerusalem in the course of a striking military operation and had his generals drive almost to the gates of Constantinople. One might have thought then that the empire was experiencing a new surge of strength; but when this spectacular

[1] That is if we accept J. Wolski's argument in "The decay of the Iranian empire of the Seleucids and the chronology of Parthian beginnings" (p. 1292); cf. *idem*, "L'historicité d'Arsace I[er]" (p. 1292). See pp. 28ff. and also 686ff. for a full discussion.

achievement was followed by an even more spectacular defeat, followed by a period of chaotic rule and internal strife, it became evident that the Sasanians were now a spent force, the splendours of Khusrau II's reign being the swan song of their empire. A plethora of ephemeral claimants to the throne revealed an inner weakness in the body politic of the country, which made it lose its sense of direction and purpose. The dynasty was doomed and fell to the onslaught of a small army of inspired Arabs in conditions reminiscent of the fall of the Arsacids. A new world order emerged now under the banner of Islam which subsumed and incorporated several Middle Eastern societies – Syrian, Mesopotamian, Iranian and Central Asian – which had exhausted their energies in the course of their social and political endeavours.

The millennium, of which the bare political outline is drawn above, is interesting to the historian for several reasons. Not only does it encompass the rise and fall of a number of significant empires and the growth and decline of several religious systems, but it also offers to the student of history an uncommon interplay of cultural currents – ancient Middle Eastern, Greek, Iranian, Indian, and Central Asian – in an area vast enough to allow a panoramic view of their interactions.

THE SOURCES

The first business of the historian is to ascertain the facts, the raw material for his analysis. He then hopes to discover generalities which will explain as many of the facts as possible, enabling him to arrange these facts in intelligible patterns. Such patterns may then be used for comparison with similar ones of other times and places in order to arrive at a more comprehensive sense of historical experience. Only then may one dare pose such tantalizing questions as: what rules govern cultural relations when societies of different background and achievement are thrown together? How do societies respond to physical or social challenges when they have exhausted their own inner resources? What makes cultures prosper and wilt, religious systems work or fail?

Accordingly, the primary task of this volume has been to determine and set down the facts of Iranian history between the fall of two mighty empires, the Achaemenian and the Sasanian, in an intelligible fashion; and here the historian faces his first major problem. Large, and sometimes, crippling gaps in our information make a coherent and well-ordered narrative of events extremely difficult. Adequate sources for

some periods or areas are lacking. Such is the case, for instance, with regard to the religious organization and civic administration of the Iranians under the Seleucids, or the events taking place in Eastern Iran, Transoxiana and the adjoining lands during the millennium. The remains of the long centuries of Parthian hegemony, whether epigraphic or archaeological, are dismally few.[1] We are somewhat better informed about the Sasanian times, particularly the 3rd century, for which we possess a number of rock inscriptions and reliefs, notably those of Shāpūr I and the high-priest Kartīr (or Kirdēr). We have also ample written reports from both Iran and Byzantium for the later Sasanian period from Khusrau I (531–79) onward. Unfortunately we are practically in the dark as regards the events and currents of the middle period, such as the developments in religious thought and practice, and the westward movement of Central Asian tribes – the Huns, the Hephthalites, and the Turks – which seriously affected the course of Iranian history. We are equally ill informed on social organizations, economic affairs, and the intellectual concerns of the period.

One must bear in mind that in Iran the imparting of knowledge and lore was based mostly on oral transmission.[2] As a result, written sources for the history of the period are sparse. In fact, not a single book survives from pre-Islamic Iran. This scarcity of written documents is not, however, wholly due to the paucity of production. Many were lost or destroyed during the course of Iran's turbulent history. The Sasanians, in their calculated attempt to promote their legitimacy, deliberately obliterated many vestiges of Parthian sovereignty.[3] One can also imagine how the conquering Arab armies or zealous Persian converts must have treated the Zoroastrian books or all that they considered to be evidence of "pagan" Iran. But it is mostly the long centuries of internecine wars in Islamic times, resulting in the destruction of cities and monuments, that have deprived us of all but a fraction of the remains of pre-Islamic Iran. Thus, in the sites of such ancient cities as Balkh, Marv, Nīshāpūr, Rhagae, and Ecbatana there is not a single historical monument of the period standing; many cities like Gundīshāpūr, Ctesiphon, Shīz and Bīshāpūr have disappeared entirely.

To this quantitative problem of sources originating in Iran itself, we must add some qualitative ones. The Iranians, unlike the Greeks who possessed a propensity for recording factual data and a searching

[1] See pp. 861f., 1037ff., 1262ff. for a listing of these remains.
[2] See pp. 1155ff.
[3] See pp. 473f.

curiosity about peoples and places, were more interested in either declamatory statements, such as we find in the texts of the inscriptions, or the rhetorical rendering of events, embellished like works of literature and entertainment. This was the tradition which was followed in the redaction of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, a mixture of legendary and authentic history of the Iranian nation, compiled in late Sasanian times; it is well reflected also in Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma* which is ultimately based on the Sasanian compilation. Great as the *Shāh-nāma* is as an epic, it leaves many questions of substance and detail unanswered that perhaps more prosaic historians with the training and method of a Herodotus, Pliny, or Procopius would have clarified.

Iranian historiography, as seen through Arabic and Persian renderings, is often selective, impressionistic, and anecdotal, making use of conventional themes, floating motives, typical scenes, recurrent descriptions and fixed epithets.[1] Historical works were often meant to move more than to inform. They belong to a tradition with its own particular norms and purposes[2] and therefore are not ideal tools to serve analytical history as understood in the West.

Another qualitative problem arises from the aristocratic nature of Iranian historiography. In Parthian and Sasanian times the written word was largely the domain of the scribal class and the priests. We know little about the recording of history in Parthian times and no historical works are attributed to that epoch. In the Sasanian period the scribes and priests shared the same ideology and were united in support of a regime which found its fullest expression in the authority of the King of Kings. Any recording of secular events was generally, it seems either sponsored or controlled by the courts of kings and nobles. We know of official records of royal deeds and pronouncements kept at the Sasanian court.[3] Needless to say, such records tended to enhance the image of the king and to support official policies. Registering the royal enthronement speeches, successes in war, the founding of cities or fire temples, and reports of the kings' official deeds appear to have constituted the bulk of such records. These were accessible to the high-ranking scribes at court who could make use of them, but again only in a manner which would not be at variance with the wishes and policies of the reigning monarch.[4] Many blanks in the native historical traditions

[1] See pp. 367ff. on the character of Iranian historiography. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Agathias IV.30.3–4; Ḥamza (p. 1304), 48; see also pp. 319f.

[4] Cf. Klima, *Beiträge* (p. 1363), pp. 16ff., who argues that Khusrau I deliberately kept the mention of Mazdak out of all records.

would appear to be the result of the suppression of unsavoury, displeasing or embarrassing records. That is probably why we do not hear much of any schisms in the long history of Mazdayasnian religion. Above all that is why the history of the Arsacids is reduced in the Sasanian tradition almost to nothing. The complete disappearance of Kartīr, the formidable architect of Sasanian state religion, from later records may be due to the animosity of Narseh, whose earlier attempts at succession Kartīr had apparently failed to endorse.

In general, Sasanian historical tradition served the ideals and interests of nobles and priests. As the basis of Iranian polity, their ideals and interests sometimes even overrode the whims or private policies of individual kings. In numerous instances we see that the kings are restricted or manipulated by an alliance of the nobles or the *mōbad*s or both. The conditions for succession presented by representatives of the two classes to Bahrām V is a case in point.[1]

The state of written records in Iran being what it is, archaeological finds, coins, inscriptions, rock reliefs, ostraca, papyri, graffitti and architectural remains from the period assume special importance. But it is to classical writers that we are chiefly indebted for their enlightening reports on the events in Iran. Valuable as such reports are, however, one cannot expect them to be balanced or free of bias, since they derive from countries inimical towards and often at war with Iran. Classical writers were naturally less well informed about the conditions and events in eastern Iran, but even about western Iran the information they furnish is selective and deficient in understanding of Iranian culture and society.[2] Still more partial are Syrian and Armenian writers whose coreligionists were often persecuted by the Iranians and whose bias is generally caused by the difference of faith. We depend chiefly on coins and archaeological evidence for the little we know about the history of eastern Iran and Transoxiana.

In order to arrive at a fairly coherent history of the period, therefore, we often have to resort to reconstructions, and to make assumptions based on such meagre material as our sources provide. In view of the conservatism of Iranian institutions, the method of retrospection and projection often proves helpful in this endeavour. For instance, we feel entitled to deduce from the court etiquette in Islamic times procedures pertaining to the Sasanian era, or to derive information about the rules

[1] See *Shāh-nāma*, Moscow ed. VII, pp. 285f. and 294ff.

[2] Cf. pp. 21f., and 684f.

of succession among the Arsacids from political and legal information we have about the Sasanians.[1] Further, we may project the Achaemenian social estates or the temple-cult of images into Parthian times.

It is only by culling information from widely diverse sources, and by making judicious use of imagination and speculation that the challenge of writing a reasoned history of the period can be met.

THE GREEK PRESENCE IN IRAN

In less than ten years, Alexander and his army overthrew an imperial system and crushed an international bureaucratic machine which had been in operation for over 200 years. The burning down of the royal palaces at Persepolis symbolized the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. We have no record of how the Iranians felt and what consternation they experienced when the towering structure of the Achaemenian state crumbled, and the people who had been the masters of the world became overnight subjected to foreign rule. One can only guess at the bewilderment and profound distress that the rout of the Persian army, the fall of the royal house, and the emergence of the Greeks as masters must have caused in the heartland of Iran. A faint echo of the people's dismay and the priests' outrage is found in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature, which remembers the "accursed" (*gijastag*) Alexander as the destroyer of fire-temples, the burner of the holy scriptures, and the murderer of the magi; the early Sasanian propaganda portrayed him as the annihilator of Iran's unity and power, the originator of the "petty kings system" (*kadag-xwadāyīh*), and the author of many woes for Iran.

The new masters, although familiar to the Persians through long periods of Greco-Iranian association, war, trade, and travel, were ethnically different, did not speak an Iranian language, practised a different religion, and held a different concept of government from that of the Iranians. But unlike the barbarian invaders from the northeast, the Greeks had a brilliant culture, with advanced techniques in military operations, art, and architecture, not to mention a system of government, many aspects of which fair-minded Iranians could envy. Their impact was one of far-reaching dimensions; it is seen at work during the Hellenistic period in Iran, which extends roughly from the foundation of the Seleucid dynasty almost to the end of the Parthian period

[1] Cf. pp. 21ff., 681f.

and in some respects a little beyond. This impact, however, produced in Iran a result differing from that in Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt. Hellenism in these countries had a full flowering and spread a new form of culture; in Iran it remained only an influence – albeit a strong one. In other words, Iran did not lose its basic identity and did not abandon its own cultural traits, embodied above all in its religion. It soon attempted to pull away from the West, aspiring towards a self-assertion which culminated in the proud Sasanian nationalism and the exclusiveness of the Zoroastrian church.

Alexander founded (or renamed) a number of Alexandrias, and the Seleucids and the Greco-Bactrian kings proceeded to establish other Greek cities, stretching from northwestern India and the shores of the Oxus to Asia Minor.[1] Those cities in which Greek and Macedonian citizens lived were self-governing entities (*poleis*) with their own councils and assemblies, military defence and finances, religious and athletic centres. Some Iranian cities and towns were granted a status which approximated that of a polis, namely *politeuma*. Once the Achaemenian establishment vanished, the polis became the model of urban living, attracting the Iranian elite. It was from the polis that Greek culture emanated and the Greek language made its impact. In the course of a few decades the higher strata of Iranian society adopted much of Greek customs and procedures. Thus, when the first Parthian king rose to power, his coins were struck after Seleucid models and imprinted with Greek legend, as were those of King Hyknapses of Elymais about 162 B.C. and King Hyspaosines of Characene about 125 B.C. In 141 B.C. Mithradates I used the epithet philhellene, "lover of the Greeks", in order to please and attract Greek inhabitants of the newly-conquered territories.[2] This epithet continued on Parthian coins to the end of the dynasty. The coins that Mithradates struck in Ecbatana bear the galloping Dioscuri on the reverse. Mithradates' son, Phraates, in imitation of the Seleucid kings who had assumed divine status, styled himself on his coins Theopatoros, "of divine descent".[3]

As a result of Greek supremacy, the Greek language was studied by Iranian bureaucrats and those with political aspirations, and Greek literature was cultivated.[4] It has often been repeated that when news of

[1] See pp. 821ff. for a survey of these cities and pp. 8ff. and 713ff. for their organization and administration.

[2] See p. 282.

[3] From the time of Mithradates II also frequently Epiphanes "(god)manifest".

[4] On Hellenism in Iran cf. pp. 12ff., 111ff., 508, 713ff., 821ff., 910.

the crushing victory of the Parthian army at the battle of Carrhae (53 B.C.) and the ignominious defeat and death of the Roman general, Crassus, was brought to Orodes, he and his court were being entertained by the Armenian king with a performance of Euripides' *Bacchae*.[1]

Among the rare written documents from the Parthian period are three parchments relating to the sale of the same vineyard. Of these, two dated 88/87 and 22/21 B.C. are in Greek (the third in Parthian), which shows the currency of Greek and its validity in courts. Even in the 3rd century A.D., when Shāpūr I wanted to record his victories over the Romans he used in his renowned inscription at the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, not only Middle Persian and Parthian, but also Greek;[2] such was the prestige of the language some 400 years after the Seleucids had been driven out of Iran.

The Greek script was not only used for Greek itself, but was adopted in eastern Iran by the Bactrians to render their Iranian language;[3] and later when the Kushans conquered Bactria, they adopted both the Bactrian language and the Greek alphabet, as is seen in their lapidary inscriptions and on their coins.

Indications of Greek influence can be seen in a number of other fields as well. Drachma (Pers. *dir(h)am*) and denarius (Pers. *dīnār*) were adopted as the basic denominations of currency. Some designations of weight and measures were borrowed from the Greek, as is seen in Middle Persian *stēr*, and in the division of the whole into six equal parts (Pers. *dāng*). The words for silver (*sīm*) and for a good many precious stones (diamond, emerald, pearl, ruby) in Persian are derived from the Greek and this suggests the value placed by the people not only on Greek jewellery and its craftsmanship, but also on the polis as the centre of high life and fashion.

The Greek presence was felt even in the religious sphere. Greek temples and statues could be seen in Greek cities from Punjab to Asia Minor, from Jaxartes to the island of Khārg in the Persian Gulf. We may recall that the cult of images and icons was promoted by Artaxerxes II (404–359 B.C.) who, according to Berossus, the Babylonian priestly scholar writing in early 3rd century B.C., was the first to introduce the image-cult of "Aphrodite Anaitis" in the chief cities of the empire.[4]

[1] Plutarch, *Crassus* 33; cf. p. 56.

[2] See Maricq, "Res Gestae" (p. 1289).

[3] Cf. pp. 1254f.

[4] Book III.5; see S. M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu, Ca., 1978), p. 29 and nn. 118, 119 (Sources from the Ancient Near East I.5).

Although such innovation may possibly have shocked the puritan Zoroastrian priests, who considered only the imageless cult of fire altars appropriate,[1] nonetheless the king's example was followed. This development seems to have been facilitated by the familiarity of the Iranians in major centres like Sardis, Susa, and Babylon – all centres of non-Iranian cultures – with the cult of foreign deities, such as Nanai, Ishtar or Cybele, Shamash, and Nabu, whom they could identify with Anāhitā, Mithra, and Tiri (Tishtriya), respectively.[2] One might surmise that Cyrus' veneration of the gods of his conquered lands and his seeking of their blessings was understood by his own entourage as a diplomatic gesture in the light of such identifications.

The identification of foreign gods with Iranian deities, therefore, did not represent an entirely new process, but under the impact of Hellenism it took on a new dimension, and now the Iranian elite could conceive Zeus as comparable to Ahura Mazda, Apollo or Hermes to Mithra, Hera, Aphrodite or Artemis to Anāhitā, Hades to Ahriman, and Herakles to Vərəthraghna (Varhrān, Bahrām). Thus, on the coins of the Arsacids and the kings of Elymais and Characene, as well as those struck in eastern regions, we frequently find the figure of Nike, Herakles, Apollo, or Tyche, which to Iranians must have meant the deities Vanand,[3] Vərəthraghna, Mithra and X^{v}arənah. Had religious monuments been preserved from the Seleucid period in western and central Iran, we would probably have found examples similar to those of Antiochus I of Commagene, which are dedicated to the cult of Zeus-Oromasdes, Apollo-Mithra-Helios, Herakles-Artagnes (Varhrān)-Ares, along with the cult of himself and that of his country.[4]

Perhaps nowhere is the impact of Hellenism more clearly seen than in the field of art. Achaemenian art was the culmination of the art of the ancient Near East. It was deliberately eclectic, borrowing elements from the neighbouring nations, and yet through an imaginative combination and harmonious synthesis it succeeded in creating some of the finest examples of ancient Near Eastern art, both minor and monumental. Ultimately it was inspired by a vision of a unified and harmonious world ruled by the imperial power. Greek art and its underlying concepts were different. "Whereas at Susa and Persepolis",

[1] Cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrians* (p. 1352), p. 62.
[2] Cf. pp. 113, 823f., and Cumont, *Oriental Religions* (p. 1349), p. 227, n. 32.
[3] Cf. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* (p. 1300), pp. 298, 332.
[4] See Bidez-Cumont, *Les Mages Hellénisés* I (p. 1348), p. 67; Ghirshman, *Iran* (p. 1289), pp. 57ff., figs. 71–80; see also Chs. 3 and 22 in this volume and pls 37, 38.

writes Daniel Schlumberger, "traditions sometimes going back two and a half millennia into the past result in this ultimate effort towards perfection which freezes them into immutability – at that very time, on the banks of the Aegean sea, there developed an art interested in movement, always in quest of progress, never satisfied with the results achieved and engaged in a constant effort to outdo itself."[1] This art, "modern art" to the Iranians,[2] was now to be seen in Greek temples, theatres, gymnasia, and the complexes of administrative buildings in the polis, as well as in Greek artifacts. It presented a different vision, a delight in human forms, in movement and in postures born of balanced tension. Backed by the power and prestige of the conquerors, the new art became fashionable, and threw many of the premises and ideals of Achaemenian art into disuse.

Although little Hellenistic art has survived in Iran itself, the few examples which have been preserved in Iran (e.g. at Nisā) and those which have survived outside Iran (at Hatra, Dura, Assur, Palmyra, as well as in Afghanistan and northwestern India) show vast concessions to Greek art. What was made by the Greeks for their own use – the recently discovered and excavated buildings of the Greek city at Ai Khanum in Bactria, for example – is not as interesting for our purposes as the art produced by or for the Iranians under Greek influence, particularly in the post-Seleucid periods. The complex of buildings found at Nisā, the first capital of the Arsacids, is a case in point. Here, although the architecture appears to be essentially native with some Achaemenian elements,[3] the terracotta ornaments of the buildings attest to the prevalence of Hellenized art.[4] The same is true of the wall paintings and panel stuccos found at the Kūh-i Khwāja in Sīstān (pl. 78),[5] the great temple of Artemis-Anāhitā at Kangāvar (pl. 56), the Kushān monuments at Surkh Kotal north of the Hindu Kush, or the Buddhist art of Gandhara, in all of which the Greek and native elements have combined to varying degrees.

However, we would be wrong if we left off the story here, because its conclusion is quite different from what one may have been led to expect: Hellenism, which had been superimposed on latent national tendencies, was cast off in a movement initiated by the Parthians and carried out by the Sasanians.

[1] Ch. 28, p. 1028. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] See Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 29.
[4] See pp. 1037ff., and Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 275ff.
[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 41ff., figs. 55–8; Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pls. ci–civ.

THE RE-ASSERTION OF IRANIAN TRADITIONS

I have lingered on Hellenism in Iran and the instances of its influence precisely because its effects were largely transient in the long run, and the spirit and outlook of Greek culture, which nourished Western civilization many centuries later, proved in the end alien to and incompatible with the Iranian way of life.[1] So complete was this reversion that one can easily lose sight of the fact that Iran went through a period of Greek and Macedonian ascendency, when the secular élite went out of their way to adopt Greek customs and culture.

The reaction against Greek culture naturally did not start suddenly. We know next to nothing, as far as documentary evidence goes, about how the Iranians organized their life during the Seleucid period. Considering, however, the benign indifference of the Seleucids to either Hellenizing or converting their Iranian subjects,[2] and taking later events into account, we are entitled to assume as a working hypothesis that in the rural districts and townships an indigenous mode of life continued, unaffected by the Greek presence.

A distinction must be made between the image of Iran evoked by the Achaemenian state with its several capitals at Persepolis, Susa, Babylon, and Ecbatana, its sumptuous palaces and its huge army, and that of Iran under Greek domination. Achaemenian Iran was a "super-power", led by the Persians, but maintained and fortified by the financial, military, and technical resources of many nations. Seleucid Iran was a more limited entity, shorn of the huge resources that the Achaemenian power and wealth bestowed on it. When the Seleucids moved their capital to Antioch in Syria and concentrated on their western possessions, it was no doubt partly because of the limited benefits accruing from the Iranian satrapies.

Defeated but not despondent, many Iranians must have led a sullen existence under the Seleucids, resenting the loss of wealth and prestige for their people and awaiting a saviour to restore them to their once glorious days. To this period we must assign the expansion of apocalyptic literature in Iran, which looked for the appearance of the Sōshyant to punish the wicked and effect a renovation of the world. The chief surviving work of this genre, the *Zand i Vahman Yasht*, goes back, as its name implies, to an Avestan original[3] which predated Parthian rule. Literature of protest and apocalyptic prophecies of the same kind were

[1] Cf. p. 825. [2] See pp. 12ff. [3] See pp. 1194f.

produced in other parts of the Middle East under Greek domination, and the folk-histories of local and national heroes were elaborated and enhanced as a reaction to the alien rule.[1] Thus, while the westernized élite fell in with the Greek way of life, a silent but hopeful majority followed its traditional bent. It was this majority, whose cause was championed by some Arsacids and more forcefully by the Sasanians, which eventually triumphed.

The existence of simmering discontent among the Iranians and their resentment against alien domination may be seen in some flickers of evidence from Parthian times. Already in the coinage of Arsaces I, which otherwise follows the Seleucid model, signs of an ethnic nationalism emerge. On the reverse of his coins, instead of the common Seleucid motif of Apollo seated on the omphalos and holding a bow, we find an archer in steppe dress seated on a stool and holding a bow. Also on some of his coins part of the Greek legend is replaced by a word in Aramaic script.[2] Again the headgear consists of a satrapal bashlyk, familiar from the coins struck in Achaemenian times. In Persis, where the tradition of the Achaemenians was better remembered and the Macedonian supervision weak, the coins of the local rulers continue many Achaemenian features. These include the use of Aramaic script, a throned king on the reverse (Bagadāt's coins), and the king standing before a tower-altar with three fires (Oborzos' coins).[3] More revealing, however, is the evidence of the ostraca dating from the 1st century B.C. found at Nisā. They contain records of deliveries of wine and other commodities to a royal storehouse, possible as revenue to maintain "name fires" for the blessing of the souls of early Arsacid kings.[4] The names of persons (e.g. Ohrmazdīk, Artwahištak, Farnbag, Dēnmazdak) and places, as well as the unmistakable use of the Zoroastrian calendar (Avestan month and day names) attest to the Zoroastrian faith of the people and their Parthian kings; they testify to the insistence of the Parthians on retaining their traditional religious calendar and alphabet in the place of Seleucid calendar and Greek script. The occurrence of two Iranian terms on the Nisā ostraca, *mgwš* "priest, magus" and *'twršpt* "master of the fire", confirms this conclusion,[5] as does the use of the Zoroastrian calendar on the Parthian document from Avroman.

[1] Cf. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, p. 4.
[2] See pp. 279, 300ff. and pl. 1.1.
[3] Stronach, "The Kuh-i Shahrak Fire Altar" (p. 1354), p. 220.
[4] Cf. pp. 867f. and 1152.
[5] Cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p. 90.

The Nisā documents lend support to the view that in the countryside and among the conservative landed gentry (the *dehgāns*), the Zoroastrian piety continued practically undisturbed by the new order. The priestly class, whose outrage at Alexander's conquest we have already mentioned, must have been together with the dehgān class the chief custodians of Iranian traditions in the face of the Hellenistic wave.

A firm indication of the tenacity of traditional habits is afforded by the continuation of the Aramaic script, noted already in the case of the Parthian and the Persid coins, but used also on the coins of Elymais and Characene.[1] The Achaemenians, who employed the cuneiform alphabet for their monumental (mostly lapidary) inscriptions, used the Aramaic script and Aramaic scribes in their chanceries for epistolary communication. The scribes, who took dictation in the language of their employers, transformed it into their own tongue and wrote it down in Aramaic. When the letter reached its destination, a scribe would read it to his employer, mentally translating it into his employer's language and pronouncing it as such, say in Persian, Median, or Egyptian. Thus Aramaic gained wide usage throughout the empire as an international script, until Alexander's invasion dismantled the Achaemenian bureaucracy. Under the Seleucids Aramaic continued to be used as before for local correspondence and bookkeeping, but because the provinces had been released from the unifying grip of the King of Kings, they eventually developed their own variation of the Aramaic alphabet.[2] In the course of this development, a number of Aramaic words were frozen into ideograms, and important provinces came to possess a writing system in which phonetic and ideographic representations were combined. Such a system developed in Persis, Media, Parthia, Sogdiana, Chorasmia and possibly elsewhere.[3] Only in Bactria, which was governed by Greek rulers, did Aramaic writing give way to Greek. Aramaic script, although an immense improvement upon cuneiform writing, is not entirely suited to the rendering of Iranian, which belongs to the Indo-European linguistic family, whereas the Greek alphabet offers a most advantageous alternative. Yet Iranian provinces adhered tenaciously to their traditional way of writing.

When Mithradates I conquered Babylon he needed the talent of the educated people in Greek cities and Greek-oriented communities of the

[1] See Ch. 8(*b*).
[2] See Chs. 31 and 36 for full detail.
[3] See pp. 1254ff. for the case made for Bactria.

western provinces to administer a considerably expanded territory with a sophisticated urban population.[1] In a politically motivated gesture he befriended the Greek elements and called himself "lover of the Greeks" on his coins. Once the Arsacid hold became secure, however, we notice signs of weakening in this dependence. The Greek legends become perfunctory and less and less legible, noticeably after Mithradates II (*c.* 123–91 B.C.); Aramaic inscriptions surface from time to time, and some new symbols (such as a star and a crescent moon) appear on the coins. The Pahlavi books have kept a tradition, according to which the Parthian king Vologeses (possibly Vologeses IV) ordered the collection and preservation of all the Avestan texts and their commentary, the Zand, which had survived Alexander's onslaught.[2] Thus beneath the façade of the philhellenism of the Arsacids we get glimpses of an attachment to native religion and culture. This attachment was presumably particularly strong among the Hyrcanian branch of the Arsacids founded by Gotarzes (d. A.D. 51).[3] This monarch, who opposed and defeated Mithradates, an Arsacid prince supported by Rome, appears to have been a champion of Iranian sentiments. His attention to religious worship is mentioned by Tacitus (*Annals* XII. 13); he publicly reviled Mithradates as a Roman puppet. Gotarzes and several of his descendants figure in a short list that Ṭabarī and some other Muslim historians provide of the Arsacid kings, while ignoring many famous Arsacids mentioned by the Roman historians. The same group (Gōdarz, Gīv, Bīzhan) are remembered in the national epic as stalwart warrior-nobles who defend the integrity of Iranian lands under the legendary Kayanians. This remembrance, and the tales of valour woven around their persons, must surely have been connected with their staunch backing of Iranian causes and traditions against some westernized Arsacids of Media and Mesopotamia. The proverbial antagonism of the Rāzīs and the Marvazīs[4] may well go back to the rivalry and divergence of points of view between the more traditional Godarzīs of the East and the westernized Kārin princes of the West.

To support the foregoing thesis, we have the further evidence of the heroic cycles which developed in Parthian times. True, no Parthian

[1] See p. 18.

[2] *Dēnkart*, ed. Madan (p. 1385), 412.5–11; Zaehner, *Zurvan* (p. 1354), p. 8.

[3] For Gotarzes' identity see p. 78; for a discussion of his line see V. Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn: A Parthian Romance", revised version, in *Iranica: Twenty Articles* (Tehran, 1964), pp. 180ff. (University of Tehran Publications 775).

[4] Cf. Rūmī, *Mathnavī*, ed. R. Nicholson, I, p. 19, l. 288; and Dihkudā, *Amthāl u ḥikam* II, 2nd printing (Tehran, 1959), p. 857; see also Minorsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 186ff.

poetry or work of literature survives in its original form from the Arsacid era, but all the evidence shows that what came to be known as the Iranian national epic, which had its origin in Kayanian heroic poetry, was enriched, elaborated, and transmitted in the Parthian period. With the advance of the Parthian armies against the Seleucids and the consolidation of Arsacid power, the proud epics of the East spread to the other regions, and what had been local gradually became national. As the memory of the Median and Achaemenian kings faded into oblivion, these epics came to assume the character of national history. Adapted to Sasanian conditions, they were eventually compiled in late Sasanian times and committed to writing. The compilation, known as the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, became the basis of Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma*, with its Zoroastrian elements greatly reduced.[1]

The legends of this "national history", which are the most important literary heritages of pre-Islamic Iran, provide us with an undated but unmistakable record of Iranian sentiment, a true expression of the persevering Iranian spirit and ideology.

We may now consider the problems of the political ideology, religious direction, and artistic tendencies of the period in the light of the above premises. It will be seen that in all those fields, too, a movement away from Greek influence and toward self-assertion is noticeable.

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY

The Seleucids, who had won their vast empire by force of arms, naturally exploited it; they levied taxes and troops from provinces and allotted land to Greek cities for their maintenance. They counted heavily on the support of their Greek subjects, for whom they cared most. Their power depended essentially on the good will of their subjects, and thus "was not institutional but personal".[2] With the accession of the Arsacids the traditional type of monarchy was renewed – a monarchy which based its legitimacy initially on its blood tie with the royal Achaemenian house.[3] The Arsacid kings, like their Sasanian successors, proclaimed their authority not on the basis of their subjects' good will, but as bestowed by the supreme deity, whom in a sense they represented on earth. Thus, their authority was institutional, not

[1] See Ch. 10(*b*) for details.

[2] E. Bickerman, p. 7.

[3] Arrian, *Parthica* frag., quoted in Photius 58, *apud* Debevoise, *History of Parthia* (p. 1291), p. 10.

personal. In practice of course both the Seleucids and the Parthians gained their kingdoms by the sword; the ideologies behind their power, however, were different. In Iran as elsewhere in the Middle East, power was conceived as being granted from above. God appointed both the prophets and the kings and in both cases the people's consent was ideologically irrelevant. Greece in its classical era produced no prophets and no great kings. In western Asia, on the other hand, these were the chief instruments for regularizing social and political life.

From various indications, by classical authors in particular, we learn of the great authority of the Parthian King of Kings, and the high esteem in which he was held by his people. Some of the Arsacid kings called themselves "of divine descent", a title also used by early Sasanian kings (*mzdysn bgy*. . . *MNW čtry MNyzd'n* "Mazdā-worshipping lord. . . of the race of gods"), which, if taken literally, is somehow out of place in Iran. Considering the silence of the Perso-Arab and classical historians on any claim by Iranian kings to divinity, and judging by the text of Shāpūr I's great inscription at Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, one is led to believe that the title was rather a conventional one inherited from the Seleucids, with no real intent of demanding worship.[1] *Bagh* "god, lord", as its later semantic development into "a man of rank" indicates, may already have lost its exclusively divine value by the end of Achaemenian times.

Even if such titles were no more than conventions, in terms of veneration and obedience the Arsacid and Sasanian kings were placed far above ordinary mortals. In the Iranian patriarchal society the immense authority of the heads of agnatic groups partook of and symbolized the exalted status of the ancestors. The king's authority not only in his own clan, but also among his people, to whom he represented an important father figure, derived partly from an ingrained attitude which assigned sweeping powers to the head of the family and which found expression in Zoroastrian family law.[2] Shāpūr I demonstrates this typical veneration of the patriarchs by instituting, as he describes it in his great inscription, fires for the benefit of the souls of his father, Ardashīr, and his grandfather, Pāpak, as well as for the souls of their kin and courtiers. We seem to have another example of this filial piety in the temples at Nisā, which apparently were founded by Parthian kings for the blessing of the souls of past kings.[3]

[1] *Contra* on the deification of Sasanian kings, see pp. 1080ff.

[2] On Zoroastrian family law see p. 641ff; on the nature of the king's authority see pp. 683ff.

[3] See p. 694.

It was the inviolate status of the royal person and the pervasive ideology of his boundless authority that helped keep the Arsacids, and later, the Sasanians on the throne for so long and through so much turbulence. The *Shāh-nāma*, although composed during the ascendency of the caliphs, true to its origin, gives a genuine expression to the exalted conception of kingship in pre-Islamic Iran.[1]

Religious nationalism

Although Ardashīr and his son Shāpūr may not have had a compelling religious policy, the rise of the Sasanians to power was not without a religious aspect. The latent forces which brought down the Arsacids also paved the way for the growth of an organized Church and the imposition of a strict religious uniformity. It was not the kings, though, who initiated this religious development, but rather the priests with the eventual support of Sasanian rulers.

As the Sasanians strove toward centralization, so also did the Church. In a sense the power of the King of Kings and that of the mōbadān mōbad are two expressions of the same tendency, two dimensions of the same phenomenon. Ardashīr's connection with the temple of Anāhitā in Stakhr ought not to mislead us into believing that in Ardashīr we had a priest-king or that the Sasanian state began as a theocracy. The temple connection appears to have been one of sponsorship or of the administration of finances, similar to the office of a *mutawallī* in Islamic times, rather than an actual priesthood.

The real champion of organizing the Church into a coherent system with political power and a firm grip over the spiritual and temporal life of the Zoroastrians was the priest Kartīr. Presumably following in the footsteps of Tansar, the chief priest under Ardashīr, this extraordinary personality acquired enough power to have four fairly long, rock-carved inscriptions associated with royal monuments.[2] Three of them (at Naqsh-i Rustam, on rock and on Ka'ba, and at Sar Mashhad), repeating the same text, tell of his steady advance from the rank of *hērpat* (Ka'ba, l. 3) under Shāpūr I, to the highest dignity under Bahrām II, including the rank of "the lord (*p'txš'y*) of the temple of Anāhīt-Ardashīr in Stakhr" (*ibid.*, l. 8), a title borne until then only by Sasanian kings. He also describes the measures he took to ensure the purity of the Maz-

[1] See pp. 403f.
[2] See p. 1210 on his inscriptions.

dayasnian religion and the observance of its precepts. The second inscription describes a spiritual journey that Kartīr makes to the Beyond, emulating that of Ardā Virāz and foreshadowing that of Dante; he encounters his *alter ego* (*dēn*) and ascertains the existence of heaven and hell to reward righteousness and punish deceit.

As a result of the measures that Kartīr took to enforce his doctrine, according to him, the Mazdayasnian religion prospered; Ohrmazd and the *yazad*s (gods) were properly served; water, fire, and cattle were satisfied; the magi thrived; fire-temples were established throughout the realm; Ahriman and demons were struck down and their teachings proscribed; the believers of other religions, namely, Jews, Buddhists (*šmny*), Brahmans, Sabians (*n'sl'y*), Christians, Baptists (*mktky*)[1] and Zandiks were persecuted; and many who had deviated from the straight path were returned to the faith.

While Kartīr's successive ecclesiastical titles indicate the growth of a Church organization, his confident and zealous assertion of orthodoxy demonstrates, even more than Ardashīr's insurgence, a manifestation of genuine Iranian attitudes and sentiments and the culmination of an anti-alien movement which had its beginnings already under the Seleucids.

What kind of religious reform did Kartīr introduce and what were the heresies and doctrinal degenerations that he combated with such ardour? Who were the heterodox who were chastised? A satisfactory answer to all these questions is not available, given the amount of information at hand, but it can be said that Kartīr's was an iconoclastic movement, with an exclusive view of religious truth, which aimed at restoring the Mazdayasnian religion to what he considered to be its original purity, with emphasis on the promotion of the cults of fire and water and the care of the cattle. He strove to focus religious worship around fire-temples served by disciplined magi. He considered all deviation from the official Church views as hostile and demonic and was suspicious and intolerant of other religions. The authoritarianism, centralism, and exclusiveness of the Sasanian church was a vigorous expression of the same tendencies that made the rise of the Sasanians to power possible.

[1] See H. W. Bailey in this volume, p. 907.

THE ARTS

This return to an Iranian mode of life and thought which we have explored above in the domains of political and religious ideology can be seen as well in the development of art. We have noted already that examples of Parthian art are to be found mostly on the fringes of the Iranian plateau, more particularly in Iraq and Syria. By looking at this art, for instance at Dura-Europos, we see instantly that it is different in concept and treatment from Greek art. We find no attempt at rendering the human or animal anatomy in a plastic fashion, but instead a linear configuration of the body with almost no interest in fleshing it out. Rostovtzeff in his extensive discussion of Parthian art[1] advanced the view that the reaction against the Greek fashion in art began first in Parthia and spread with the growing power of the Arsacids to the Syro-Mesopotamian regions (Dura, Assur, Hatra, Palmyra), the Anatolian provinces (Commagene, Cappadocia, Pontus), northwestern India and Afghanistan (Gandharan art) and the Greek cities of South Russia; this movement also exerted an influence on the art of the Han dynasty in China, and "led at length to the creation of a polychrome style which became *the* ornamental style of Central and Western Europe for many centuries (the Gothic or Merovingian style)".[2] Further, according to Rostovtzeff the Sarmatians of South Russia, being influenced by Parthian art, affected to a certain extent the development of Roman provincial art.[3] Ghirshman, echoing the same opinion, writes that "under the Parthians, Iran breaks free from Hellenism and imposes its artistic conceptions on a large area of the eastern world, from the Euphrates to China, from Siberia to India, from the highlands of Mongolia to the Bosphorus ... Furthermore, the widespread diffusion of Iranian costume and Iranian personal adornments (Surkh Kotal, Gandhara, Mathura) points to the existence of a *koine*, an artistic *lingua franca*, among the peoples of the East during the Parthian supremacy."[4]

Rostovtzeff distinguishes several features which characterize Parthian art as seen on Parthian monuments in Iran and the Syro-Mesopotamian plains. Chief among these is "the frontality" of human and animal figures. Others are linearity of contour; painstaking depiction of details of dress, ornament, furniture and ethnic characteristics (oriental "Verismus"); spirituality, in that the faces and features of gods or holy personages are made to appear celestial and ethereal, even without the

[1] "Dura" (p. 1350). [2] *Ibid.*, p. 298. [3] *Loc. cit.* [4] *Iran*, p. 280.

help of a halo or radiant crown; repetition of the same figures with rigid ritual poses and expressions in the depiction of ceremonial and conventional scenes; and finally in the scenes of hunt, combat or chase, portrayal of figures on horses at a flying gallop.[1]

Some art historians would not go quite as far as Rostovtzeff in counting all the above features as innovations attributable to Parthian art.[2] Even if one should not agree entirely with the scope of influence attributed to Parthian art, it is evident that during the Parthian epoch there developed an art in Irano-Mesopotamian regions, which, while it still displayed elements of Greek art, was based on native traditions and followed different principles from Greek art. The native art of these regions did not die with the appearance of Greek art in Western Asia, but continued to exist in the hands of the local craftsmen and artists, while borrowing some elements, motives, and stylistic features of Greek art. In Iran this was not the imperial art of the Achaemenians, an eclectic art which resulted from international cooperation and symbolized a supernational power, but a more genuine indigenous art, inherited from the past, oriental in concept and execution, and intelligible to the local population.

When the Parthians reached the western provinces of their empire they found an art which had blended the features of local, Greek and Achaemenian art. Later, an art form which was more Iranian and Central Asian in concept and style, with fewer and diminishing Greek influences, developed and spread. This occurred after the Parthians were well established and particularly after their defeat of Crassus at the Battle of Carrhae and their advance towards Syria and Anatolia. The centre of diffusion for this art, which Rostovtzeff calls the renaissance of Iranian art under the Parthians,[3] must have been the Parthian capital in Mesopotamia. As the Greek cities became more and more orientalized and absorbed by their geographical environment they, too, gradually adopted the native art style and contributed to it.

With the Sasanians the monumental character of their art is best exemplified in the rock reliefs of the early kings. These reliefs, celebrating as they do the triumphs of Sasanian monarchs over their enemies and the investiture of kingship in them by Iranian gods, reflect the pride and majesty of a new and powerful dynasty.

[1] See Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, pp. 223ff., 237ff., 256, 272, 287ff. Cf. Schlumberger, Ch. 28, pp. 1050ff.

[2] See Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 1ff., for a brief review and comment.

[3] Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*

The relative abundance and exuberance of early Sasanian royal sculptures in the face of the paucity of the same kind of art from the Parthian period may create the impression of a "renaissance" of Persian art under the Sasanians. As Rostovtzeff pointed out long ago, this is only a myth: "the backbone of it [i.e. Sasanian art] was the Parthian art and it was through Parthia that the Sasanians acquired and adopted some of the leading features of Persian Achaemenian art."[1] However, one cannot deny that there is such intensity of purpose and vigour of presentation in the early Sasanian art that it creates the impression of an entirely new art. The first phase of this art, that of the 3rd century, still exhibits some of the Greek elements present in Parthian art, but such elements are progressively eliminated, so that in the art of the 6th and 7th centuries hardly any is left.[2]

Like Parthian art, Sasanian art adheres to the principle of frontality (although not so exclusively) and continues with realistic details. In addition to reproducing graphic scenes objectively observed, Sasanian imperial art supports dynastic purposes and intentions. Scenes of the king overcoming his enemy in single combat symbolize his power, even though he may never have fought such a battle. The rendering of defeated enemies in smaller scale than the victorious monarch of course signifies their lower and abject status. The scenes of royal hunt, banquet, enthronement and the like, whether in rock reliefs, silver vessels, or painting, are all intended to glorify a king or a dignitary, thus conforming to the political ideology of the Sasanian state.

In the field of literary arts, it is noteworthy that although Greek literature was enjoyed by the westernized Parthian nobility and at court,[3] the Greek literary genres which did not have an Iranian counterpart, notably drama, never took root in Iran; the Iranians continued with their own brand of epic, lyric, and didactic literature. No other field better demonstrates perhaps that Greek culture remained essentially alien to the Iranian spirit.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In the foregoing we have outlined the course of the reaction against Hellenism, which in time led to the organization of a national state and the foundation, under the Sasanians, of a national Church. Underlying

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 296.
[2] Cf. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, pp. 338–9.
[3] See p. 56.

both was the ideological principle of indisputable authority divinely granted. This principle was in accord with and endorsed by a hierarchical society, controlled by the two privileged classes, the priests and the nobles.

From the point of view of social stratification, the population of the country could first be divided between the free-born and the slaves. Evidence for the existence of slaves in Iran and their place in the economy comes from both classical sources and Zoroastrian writings. Many slaves were originally captives of war. They were employed in agriculture, construction, crafts, as pages and domestic servants, and also as soldiers.[1]

The free, non-slave population could be divided again into two categories: those who enjoyed civic rights as full citizens, and those who, although free, were deprived of citizenship but protected under the law as subjects of the King of Kings. Included in the latter category were aliens (*uzdēh*), freed slaves, and persons who had been expelled from the community for committing a crime or adopting a non-Zoroastrian faith.

The majority of Iranians, however, were citizens (*mard ī šahr*, *ādēhīg*) capable of exercising full civic rights. They could acquire real property and dispose of it, enter into contractual agreements, have recognized heirs and successors, and take part in religious worship and social affairs.

The family or *dūdag* (lit. "smoke", signifying the family hearth) formed the basic unit of Iranian society; it was patriarchal, patrilineal, polygamous, extended, and as a rule endogamous. The members of the family were bound together not only by kinship, but through it they also shared a range of rights and responsibilities. Most conspicuously, they were linked together by common religious worship at the family hearth, the cult of common ancestors, common property, and partnership in economic enterprise. Brothers living together in an extended family had only a theoretical share in the family's real property and means of production. Whereas the adult male members of the family could assume full legal authority within the family hierarchy, women and minors remained subordinate as wards.[2]

A larger community of kinsmen, the agnatic group (*xvēšāvandān*, *hamnāfān*), consisted of a number of families, extended or individual,

[1] See pp. 634ff. for details on the subject.
[2] See Ch. 18 for details of social organization.

which could trace their lineage to a common ancestor within the living memory of the eldest heads of the families. The group was united by some common rights and obligations, amounting nearly to clannish solidarity.[1] Major families were represented at the court, as a rule, by their incumbent heads. Since some public and court positions, as well as allotment of lands as fief, had assumed a hereditary character, the position of the individuals in the high-ranking agnatic groups sometimes entailed hereditary office or dignity.

Social estates

Although class distinction did not develop perhaps into quite as rigid a caste system as in India, nevertheless the barriers between the estates (*pēšags*) were by no means easy to cross, particularly those between the commoners and the privileged classes. In *The Letter of Tansar* the founder of the Sasanian dynasty is quoted as having proclaimed that "nothing needs such guarding as degree among men", and is said to have established "a visible and general distinction between men of noble birth and common people with regard to horses and clothes, houses and gardens, women and servants... so no commoner may share the sources of enjoyment of life with the nobles, and alliance and marriage between the two groups is forbidden".[2]

The Iranians were divided from ancient times – at least from the Achaemenian period – essentially into three classes: priests, warriors or nobles, and husbandmen. In the younger Avesta the three classes are designated as *āθravan-* ("fire priest"), *raθaēštar-* "charioteer, warrior") and *vāstryō.fšuyant-* ("herdsman"). In Sasanian times, with the development of economy, increasing specialization, and the burgeoning of the bureaucracy, the three traditional estates could hardly correspond in their simple form to the actual situation. As a result the category of *dabīrān* "scribes, bureaucrats", of which the rank and file were drawn presumably from the *moγān* ("priestly class") and the *āzādān* (the nobility), was promoted to the rank of a social estate. It apparently included also court physicians, astrologers, poet-musicians, and similar professionals. Bahrām V so appreciated the talent of the musicians at court that he is said to have elevated them to a higher station, equal to that of the nobles.[3] Beside the third estate, that of the "husbandmen",

[1] See pp. 641ff. for further detail.
[2] Minuvi 1st ed. (p. 1387), p. 19; tr., p. 44.
[3] Cf. *Kitāb al-tāj* (p. 1304), p. 28.

was also added the category of *hūtuxšān* "those who exert themselves well", which encompassed craftsmen and, apparently, traders.[1] It may be surmised that the *'ayyārs*, a type of "vigilante" who engaged in extra-legal activities and were noted at their best for their manliness, generosity and skill, and whose pre-Islamic roots cannot be seriously doubted, belonged to this subdivision.

Public law and administration was the domain of the two privileged classes. Following the efforts of Kartīr, Adurbād ī Mahrspandān, and like-minded magi, the priesthood had managed to organize itself into a state "church", which controlled education and the judiciary, and increasingly influenced the affairs of the state. The judiciary was drawn from the rank of the mōbads, with the mōbadān mōbad acting as the supreme judicial authority.[2]

There were different levels of nobility. At the bottom of the scale were the āzādān "men of [noble] birth", consisting mostly of landed gentry (dehgāns). Further, the term āzādān was used to indicate the undifferentiated body of the nobility, as opposed to the "commoners". The *vuzurgān*, "the grandees, magnates", consisted of the heads of noble clans, semi-independent rulers of small provinces and high-ranking state officials.[3] Kartīr boasts of having been made a member of this group by Bahrām II.[4] Still higher were the *vāspuhragān*, persons close to the royal house and normally related to the king. The highest rank of the nobility was that of the *šahrdārān*, the rulers of major provinces and local dynasts; they included princes of the royal house. The early Sasanians made a practice of appointing their sons and brothers and some other princes of blood to the governorship of major provinces both for security reasons and so that the future kings might have the benefit of prior experience.

The great houses had special privileges at court, and some held heriditary functions (such as crowning the king, serving as his sword-bearer, cup-bearer, etc.).[5] Their fealty to the King of Kings required not only the payment of yearly contributions to the treasury, but also the furnishing of troops and readiness to fight by the king's side in times of need. The representatives of these houses at court took part in

[1] Cf. Christensen. *L'Iran* (p. 1288), pp. 98ff.

[2] In Islamic sources the term is often translated as *qaḍī al-quḍāt*; cf. Khwārazmī, *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm*, ed. van Vloten (Leiden, 1895), p. 116.

[3] On this and the following see pp. 701ff.

[4] Ka'ba-yi Zardusht inscription, Mid. Pers., l. 8.

[5] Cf. Christensen, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

the king's council.[1] The courts of the vassal kings followed the same pattern, with local nobles holding major offices at court, as is apparent for example from the listing by Shāpūr I of the officials and nobles of the court of Pāpak, and from the composition of the courts of Armenia and Abiabene. In Sasanian times, and probably also earlier, the name, position, and privileges of the noble houses were recorded in special registers called *gāh-nāmag*.[2]

The best known houses during the Parthian and Sasanian times were those of the Sūrins and Kārins.[3] Others mentioned in the sources are the Varāzes, the Andīgāns, the Mihrāns, the Spandiyāds, the Spāhbads, and possibly the Zīks.[4] To these was to be added, of course, the reigning house. The system had old roots in Iran and was already in operation in the Achaemenian era.[5]

Marriage, divorce, and succession

Of the utmost importance to any Iranian family, whatever its social estate, was to ensure its continuation through legitimate male successors. Marriage was therefore considered a religious duty, and the elders arranged for the wedding of their sons almost as soon as they came of age. There were various kinds of marriage. The most complete form was the *pātaxšāyīh* kind – the marriage with full rights for the wife – whereby her children would be legitimate and recognized heirs and successors to her husband and would inherit his name, his position within the agnatic group, his social and religious obligations and his share of real property in the family. Marriage arrangements were made between the head of the bridegroom's family and the guardian of the bride (normally her father). Upon completion of the ceremonies, the bride left her own family and passed under the guardianship of her husband. The *kābēn* (marriage portion) and the dowry that the bride brought with her would always be hers, but other property acquired by her during her marriage would belong to her husband, unless he formally renounced it, or if the marriage contract provided otherwise. A man could enter several pātaxšāyīh marriages at the same time.[6]

[1] See p. 704.

[2] Cf. *Letter of Tansar*, Minuvi ed., p. 20; tr., p. 44.

[3] On these transcriptions rather than Sūrēn and Kārēn, see V. A. Livshitz, "New Parthian documents from South Turkmenistan", *AAntASH* xxv (1977), p. 179, n. 57.

[4] Cf. Christensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 103ff., and Henning, "Notes on the Great Inscription of Šāpūr I" (p. 1323), p. 53.

[5] See pp. 632f.

[6] For full detail on family law see Ch. 18, pp. 646ff.

Homosexuality was not tolerated and sodomy was considered a sin worthy of death.[1]

So important was it to the Iranians to preserve the name of the family, the cult of the ancestors, and the hearth fire, that they went to extraordinary lengths to ensure a male successor. The elaborate system of proxy or substitute marriages that they developed for this purpose was unique in its extent and complexity.[2]

Endogamy within the agnatic group appears to have been the rule, and marriage with close relatives (*xvēdōdah*) < Av. *xvaētvadaθa-*) was not only sanctioned, but encouraged as a pious act.[3] However, this does not mean that exogamous marriages did not occur. Several such instances are recorded for the royal family in Parthian and Sasanian times; for example, the marriage of the Parthian Phraates IV with Musa, an Italian slave girl sent as a gift by Augustus, and that of Khusrau I with a Turkish princess, who gave birth to Hormazd IV. Pātaxšāyīh marriage outside one's social estate, however, was severely discouraged, the elitist Iranian society being intent on preserving the "purity" of its blue blood. *The Letter of Tansar* cites Ardashīr as declaring, "I forbid any men of birth to seek a wife among common people", although we learn from the chiding comments of the same text on decadent nobility that the rule was not strictly observed: "Degenerate heirs appear, who adopt boorish ways and forsake noble manners and lose their dignity in the sight of the people. They busy themselves like tradesmen with the earning of money, and neglect to garner fair fame. they marry among the vulgar and those who are not their peers, and from that birth and begetting men of low character appear; and this is what is meant by 'decadence of rank'."[4]

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

The history of the Zoroastrian Church is one of the least documented areas of our concern. The Nisā ostraca and the inscriptions of Kartīr and Shāpūr I give us some precious information, as do some of the

[1] See *Mēnōg ī xrad* VIII.10, XXXVI.4, in West, *Pahlavi Texts* III (p. 1289); *Ardā Virāf Nāmak*, tr. Haug (p. 1386), XIX.7, LXXI.7; *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, ed. M. R. Unvala, I (Bombay, 1922), pp. 300, 302, 307, 310.

[2] The system is succinctly explained in the *Letter of Tansar* (Minuvi ed., pp. 21–2; tr., pp. 46–7), and figures among the rules said to have been supported and emphasized by Ardashīr. For details of the system see pp. 631ff.

[3] See p. 634ff. for details on the subject.

[4] Minuvi ed., p. 19; tr., p. 44.

Pahlavi books, especially the *Dēnkart*. Fragmentary and indirect information also comes from the other sources normally used for the history of the period, but still a great many questions remain unanswered.

In the Seleucid period the provinces of the Achaemenian empire lost the focus of their unity, and local traditions continued without much connection with one another. This is evidenced by the loss of the common Aramaic script as the *lingua franca* of written communication and the development from it of local Middle Iranian scripts. In such a situation it is almost inconceivable that the Mazdayasnian religion would remain static and pursue the same understanding of the faith in realms as far apart as Persis, Sogdiana, and Atropatene, particularly when we recall that the Seleucid and Parthian eras lasted for more than five and a half centuries. Local differences and divergent interpretations are to be expected in lands as different in background, contact and tradition, as Chorasmia and Media, one exposed to influences from the Central Asian steppes, and the other affected by the legacy of Assyrian, Urartian, Mitannian, and Cimmerian cultures. It is therefore understandable if divergent factions and "schools" of Mazdayasnian faith should have developed in the Hellenistic period.[1]

The priests of Persis, with their belief in the exclusive legitimacy of their thought and practices, used the Sasanian military and political power as a means of imposing their own brand of Mazdaism on the rest of the country, and to root out or suppress all dissent as deviation and heresy. Centres such as Shīz and Rhaga in Media, Abarshahr in Parthia, and Balkh in Bactria may have been particular targets of the zealous efforts towards unification. The earliest champion of this crusade was, according to the Pahlavi books, one Tansar (or Tōsar) who is said to have been an adviser to Ardashīr and an advocate of his policies. The crusade was pursued with even greater zeal and dedication by Kartīr. Whatever the relationship between Tansar and Kartīr,[2] it is evident that establishing a unified canon and a centralized Church authority was one of the processes concomitant with the rise of the Sasanians.

The career of Kartīr and the measures he took against those magi who did not follow his concepts have already been noted. The question, however, of who these magi were and how their beliefs and practices differed, is not easy to answer. In fact, the question of Zoroastrian

[1] Cf. *Letter of Tansar*, Minuvi ed., pp. 16, 22; tr., pp. 42, 47, which refers to measures taken by Ardashīr against heresy and innovation in religion.

[2] Cf. p. 883 and Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, pp. 102ff., and *History of Zorastrianism* II (p. 1352), p. 85.

heresies is one of the thorniest problems of the religious history of Iran. From the corpus of Middle Persian Zoroastrian works one gains the impression that there had never been any serious schisms or divergent views on the essentials. However, such a solid unity lasting for at least one and a half millennia in a country exposed to so many influences and cultures would be unusual, to say the least, and, in fact, careful scrutiny of our sources reveals traces of dissent within Zoroastrianism. Leaving aside cultic differences and regional attachments to different deities, it appears that theological controversies can be traced to at least two major tendencies, Zurvanite and gnostic.

The details of Zurvanism and the extent of its influence[1] have been subjects of lively discussion and debate. There is no doubt, though, that at certain periods and among some Iranians there existed a belief in a remote supreme being, Zurvān (or Zarvān), associated with the notion of Time and Space, from whom lesser creative principles proceeded. The most convincing argument for the existence of such a belief is that Mānī, who adapted the names of his deities to local pantheons and concepts, calls his supreme god "Zurvān" in Middle Persian, Ohrmazd being the name of a deity (the Primordial Man) created by him. Since Mānī's supreme god is rendered in Parthian by literal translation as "Father of Greatness", one may argue that Zurvanism was associated with the south and west of Iran; and since Mānī dedicated his sole book in Middle Persian, the *Shāpūrgān*, to Shāpūr I, it is deduced that at least the early Sasanians were Zurvanite Zoroastrians.[2]

Some accounts of the Zurvanite mythology are found in the writings of Armenian authors, Islamic heresiographers, and in the Syriac "Acts of the Persian Martyrs."[3] Traces are left also in some Pahlavi books, more particularly the *Bundahišn* and *Zātsparam*.[4] Because of the fragmentary nature of the reports and the censorship excerised in Zoroastrian works, our knowledge of Zurvanism is likewise fragmentary and mostly vague, but the evidence shows that a myth must have existed according to which Ohrmazd and Ahriman were brothers whose father, Zurvān, allotted a limited time for their struggle leading to the ultimate triumph of Ohrmazd. Nothing could change this preordained course. Hence the fatalistic tinge of Zurvanite ideas.

[1] See pp. 897ff., 938, 973f.

[2] Cf. p. 938; see Christensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 149ff. for a concise survey of the problems of Zurvanism, and Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 44ff.

[3] All brought together by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 432ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 276ff.

The widespread belief during the Sasanian period in an aloof and impervious master of destiny associated with Time and Space is attested by the frequent use in early New Persian literature of such pregnant words as *dahr*, *rūz(i)gār*, *zamāna*, *gardish-i ayyām*, all conveying the notion of time, and *āsmān* "heaven", and *falak*, *gardūn*, *sipihr*, *charkh*, all denoting (the wheel of) heaven and, therefore, conveying a spatial notion. In their later development, however, such concepts do not appear to have been entirely "religious", but rather belonged to folk wisdom derived from earlier religious or philosophical systems of thought which had been popularized and had entered the common store of current ideas.

Gnosticism, which owed a great debt to Zurvanism and adopted some of its principles, gained considerable popularity during the late Hellenistic period. A syncretistic doctrine of multiple origins, it appears to have particular affinity with the dualistic doctrine of Iranian religion. It was influenced, too, by Babylonian and Greek thought. Manichaeism and Mazdakism were both gnostic religions, and although both expediently claimed to represent Zoroastrian religion in its purity, their outlook was quite distinct from that of Zoroastrianism. With many gnostic sects preaching in Mesopotamia, close to the Parthian capital, and with Manichaeism and Mazdakism winning a considerable following in Iran, it is highly improbable that some gnostic tendencies did not develop within Zoroastrianism itself. The continuation of gnostic ideas among the mystics of the Islamic period and the popularity of the notion that the human soul, entrapped in the body, lives in exile in this world and yearns for release and return to its original abode, points to the persistence of a gnostic outlook which originated in pre-Sasanian times.[1]

Church and state

Of the Church organization in Parthian times we know very little. Nor do we know much about the Church's relation to the state in that period. Indirect evidence, mostly from Jewish and Christian sources, indicates a tolerant attitude on the part of the Arsacids towards non-Iranian religions, possibly continuing the Achaemenian tradition.

Once the Zoroastrian Church was organized under the Sasanians, it developed political power and made its weight felt in the affairs of

[1] For the pre-Islamic Iranian doctrines which may have affected those of the extremist Shīʿīs and the Bāṭinīs, see pp. 1010ff.

the empire. The execution of Mānī at the instigation of Kartīr in 276 under Bahrām II, is a revealing indication of how far the state had rallied to the support of the Church by that time. The regular persecution of the *zandīks*, that is, the "revisionists" (including Manichaeans), and the frequent harrassment of the Jews, Buddhists, and Christians attest to the continuing efforts of the Church to preserve its hold over the population. United as the Church and the Sasanian state were in the broad essentials, tension nevertheless surfaced between the two from time to time, the bone of contention being power and its benefits. In the Middle Persian sources, and in Arabo-Persian reports derived from them, the mōbads appear ubiquitous at court and always listened to. Such steady influence and harmony, however, must be taken with a pinch of salt; we must remember that the mōbads exerted considerable control over the written word, and the Sasanian part of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* had a decidedly religious and clerical orientation. Thus, the kings who supported the clergy, fought heresies, or built or enriched fire temples – Shāpūr II, Bahrām V, and Khusrau I, for example — received lengthy and laudatory treatment. Those who had resisted the ever-increasing power of the Church in the interest of the court or people were placed in an unfavourable light. Such is the case with Narseh (293–302), who had been spurned more than once, apparently with Kartīr's aid, in his attempt to capture the throne. He discontinued the persecutions of the Manichaeans and the Christians. Yazdgird I (399–420), a humane king of independent mind by all accounts, was dubbed "the Sinner", on account of his attempt to limit the power of the Church and the nobility and his tolerance of minority religions. The most glaring instance of tension between the royal power and the Church occurred under Kavād (488–96, 498–531), when he supported the populist Mazdakite movement against both the nobles and the Church, thereby paving the way for his downfall and exile.

Despite the latent rivalry and tension between the Church and the state, the two had essentially the same world-view and basic interests. The state usually supported the Church and often shared its suspicion of heresies. At the Church's instigation it frequently engaged in the persecution of minority religions (Jews, Christians, Buddhists) and suppression of heretics or zandīks, above all the Manicheans and the Mazdakites. The Church, in its turn, supported the structure of the state, the privileges of the nobility, the divine right of the King of Kings

and belief in total obedience to him. Both classes were united in complete identification with a Zoroastrian Iran and strong nationalistic sentiments. Through a Church-dominated education, the ideals of a Church-oriented monarchy were impressed on the minds of the young.

Religious life and ritual

The passage from childhood to adult life followed a solemn confirmation ceremony at about the age of 14, during which each adolescent child was invested with the sacred girdle (*kustīg*) and shirt (Pers. *sadra*, *sudra*) by the officiating priest. The girdle and the shirt, which were the badges of a *vēh-dēn* (follower of the Good Religion), were to be worn at all times except when bathing.

The adult members of the family were to say prayers five times a day, once during each of the five watches into which the day and night were divided, corresponding to the later Muslim practice. Like other Zoroastrian rituals, the prayers were suffused with a dualism of good and evil, exemplified in praise of Ahura Mazda and his divine helpers, and execration of Ahriman and his demons. Apart from routine daily prayers, others were prescribed to dispel evil and secure the blessing of the gods on a variety of occasions: during ablutions, before partaking of meals, upon lighting candles and lamps, at feeding the hearth fire, and so on. At major purification rituals, seasonal festivals (*gāhanbār*s), births, weddings, funeral services and commemorations of the souls of the departed (the *fravašī*s), the liturgy was performed by priests clad in immaculate white garments. It involved the recitation or chanting of often long sections of the Avesta in the original, no longer understood by the laity in Sasanian, or for that matter, in Parthian times.

The all-embracing Mazdayasnian religion determined the beliefs, decided the rights and obligations, and guided the conduct of a devout individual. An acute awareness of the forces of Evil and the need to protect oneself against their assaults permeated the life of a vēh-dēn; trust in the bounty and protective power of Ahura Mazda, the aməša. spəntas, and the yazads (deities subordinated to Ahura Mazda), on the other hand, strengthened him. He believed in the sanctity of the sun, the moon, and the sacred elements – fire and water, in particular; he had confidence in the efficacy of sacrifice, ritual, and prayers; and he was dedicated to the long cherished cult of the ancestral spirits. He was

convinced of the coming of the Saviours, which would lead eventually to victory of the good creation and utter defeat of the demons. He considered all other faiths in error and was persuaded of the wisdom of the ancients and the superiority of his religious heritage. The visible and symbolic aspects of such beliefs could be seen in frequent ritual prayers; in the dedicated care of the sacred hearth fire, which burned continuously with ritually clean wood; in the careful avoidance of pollution of the sacred elements; in the exposure of the dead to birds of prey on high ground; in obsessive concern with ritual uncleanliness, particularly that which resulted from coming into contact with dead bodies; in the performance of extensive purification rites prescribed by the canon law and generally conducted by priests; in the seclusion of women for the period of their menses for fear of contamination; in the eager killing of noxious insects, considered the creatures of Ahriman; in frequent religious festivals, often of a merry kind, accompanied with song and music; in visits to fire temples and shrines; and finally in celebrations of elaborate funeral festivals and commemoration services for the souls of the dead.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

As the only major political force east of the Tigris in western Asia for about 800 years, from the capture of Babylon in 141 B.C. by Mithradates I to the fall of the Sasanians in A.D. 651, Iran acted as a stabilizing power for a vast area stretching from Mesopotamia to the Oxus, and from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf, and sometimes beyond. It also served as a civilizing force for some of the areas which came under its domination or within its sphere of influence.

In its constant attempts to protect its domains and ward off encroachments by its neighbours, the Iranian state came into conflict on the west and the east with two powerful forces of entirely different natures. On the west Iran faced successively the Seleucid, Roman, and Byzantine empires, all well organized and sophisticated states of considerable, sometimes superior, military strength. On the east, Iranian territorial integrity was threatened by recurrent nomadic invasions.

Western front

The major threat from the west stemmed from the Roman ambitious campaigns in the Near East. Pompey's defeat of Tigranes of Armenia,

Antiochus X, and Mithradates of Pontus, all between 69 and 63 B.C., and his annexation of Syria as a Roman province brought the Roman legions to the borders of the Parthian empire. Now the Parthians faced the challenge of a great power possessing a mighty army and superior techniques. The Parthians, however, proved a potent, energetic, and untiring defender of their lands, effectively checking the Roman advance. The Romans received a first taste of the fierce fighting spirit of the Parthians and the skill and agility of their famous cavalier archers when Crassus invaded Parthia in the wake of Pompey's victories. The Roman army was annihilated by Surenas, the Iranian general, in the battle of Carrhae (53 B.C.), and Crassus having been captured and put to death, the Roman military standards, the eagles, and a large number of prisoners were left in Parthian hands. With this remarkable victory the Parthians established their fame as worthy antagonists of the Romans in the east; they advanced their frontier further west to the Euphrates, gaining the respect of the Jewish people in Babylonia and of various city states in northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Mark Antony's frustration and considerable losses in Armenia less than a generation later were yet another grievous blow to Roman ambitions.

Unlike Rome, the Iranian state under the Parthians was not essentially an aggressive one, and once the Seleucids had been made to retreat to Syria, the Parthians did not seek to expand their territory.[1] When Augustus sought to reach an understanding with the Parthians by diplomatic means, Parthia welcomed the move, and peace prevailed for three-quarters of a century. Roman aspirations to extend the boundaries of empire to control Armenia caused hostilities to resume, however, under Nero.

The Romans did manage to inflict several severe defeats on the Parthians, particularly towards the end of the Parthian reign, and the Parthian western capital, Ctesiphon, was captured and sacked by Trajan in 116, by Verus in 164, and by Septimus Severus in 197. Nevertheless, all such victories proved ephemeral and the Parthians ultimately stood their ground. Even at the nadir of their fortunes, when they were about to be ousted by the Sasanian insurgent, Ardashīr, the Arsacids were able to halt Caracalla's inroad into Parthian territory, beat the Roman invaders, and force Caracalla's successor, Macrinus, to buy peace for the sum of two hundred million sesterces.[2] The Parthians in fact

[1] Cf. Rostovtseff, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[2] See Debevoise, *op. cit.*, p. 267, for sources.

effectively blocked Roman eastward progress and frustrated any plans that the Romans may have had to step into Alexander's shoes or to capture the former Seleucid empire. This tenacity also demonstrates a remarkable cohesion and solidarity in Iranian society of the period; and this despite the somewhat lax control exercised by the Parthian King of Kings and the degree of internal autonomy enjoyed by local rulers and powerful noble families – a situation which often led to enervating internal disputes and internecine wars.

The downfall of the Parthians and the rise of the Sasanians, although a remarkable event of far-reaching consequences from the Iranian point of view, appears initially to have made little impression on the Romans, but they soon discovered that they had to contend with more ambitious, more aggressive, and more efficient leaders than the preceding Parthian kings.

One of the causes that contributed to the overthrow of the Arsacids was no doubt the repeated, humiliating defeats which they suffered on the western front during the last century of their rule. The Sasanian attempt at taking advantage of the wounded feelings of the Iranians can be seen in the new dynasty's bitter propaganda against the Arsacids; it portrayed the Parthian state as a collection of petty principalities robbed of unity and strength and as a creation of Alexander the Macedonian, who did not want to see Iran rise again. The Sasanians proposed to restore Iran to her erstwhile unity and greatness. Such ambitions are clearly evident not only from the strenuous campaigns of Ardashīr and Shāpūr I in the west, but more expressly in the quotation of such claims by Roman historians. Dio Cassius (LXXX. 4) is typical: "[Ardashīr] boasted that he would win back everything that the ancient Persians had once held, as far as the Grecian Sea, claiming that all this was his rightful inheritance from his forefathers." (Cf. also Herodian VI.2.1–2, and Ammianus XVII.5.5–6.) It should be noted, however, that the Sasanians no longer remembered the Achaemenians, who did not figure in the Zoroastrian tradition of Iranian epic cycles. They considered Dārā, who was defeated by Alexander, as the last of the Kayanians, and the Arsacids as successors to Alexander. They associated Iranian past glory with the Kayanians, not the Achaemenians.[1]

The early Sasanians were successful in consolidating their western frontiers and scoring some remarkable victories against the Romans. Conspicuous among these were the successful campaigns of Shāpūr I

[1] See Yarshater, "Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?" (p. 1308).

in Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia, and his deportation of the inhabitants of a number of cities for resettlement in Iran. He has described these triumphs in his inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht in Persis. Shāpūr I's capture and imprisonment of the Roman emperor, Valerian, in 260 was a source of satisfaction and pride, which inspired the depiction of an abject Valerian in some of the monumental sculptures Shāpūr ordered to be hewn.[1] But neither these triumphs nor some subsequent reverses substantially changed the situation in border regions, where periodic skirmishes, offensives, and counter-offensives continued.

With the conversion of Constantine to Christianity and his proclaiming it the state religion of the empire in 334, a new element entered into the political relations between the two countries. Soon the Eastern Roman Empire, established by Constantine's division of the empire and his founding of a new capital at Byzantium, eclipsed and then replaced the Roman state as far as Iran was concerned. This new empire attempted to protect the Christians outside its borders. Christianity had a substantial following in Iran, largely in the vassal kingdoms and city states which served as a buffer zone between Iran and Byzantium. Some of the oldest Christian communities were in fact to be found in the region, and the first Council of the Church was believed to have been held in 198 in Edessa, the capital of Osrhoene, in northern Mesopotamia. Some of these city states like Hatra, Edessa, Dura, Carrhae, and Amida had often been a bone of contention between Iran and Rome. As both Iran and Byzantium hardened in their adopted state religions – intransigent religions which admitted no other truth than their own – and as the frontier lines became more rigid by elimination of a number of buffer zones like Hatra and Dura, the Christians of Iran and her tributaries came under increasing suspicion; now their political loyalty was questioned when conflicts flared up between the two powers. Byzantium's concern with the religious freedom and welfare of the Christians in Iran was seen by Iran as politically motivated, as was Byzantine persecution of the Zoroastrians. This mutual suspicion aggravated the conflict and led to further persecutions, elimination of which frequently figured in peace treaties between the two parties.

Armenia and Georgia adopted Christianity as the religion of state in the early 4th century, and thereby caused more discord between the Sasanians and the Byzantines. The Armenians and Georgians bore the

[1] See p. 1083.

brunt of repeated offensives and counter-offensives by the two superpowers. Under Yazdgird II Iranian suspicion and religious zeal led in 451 to the battle of Avarair, during which a large number of Armenians who had resisted forced conversion, perished together with their leader, Vardan Mamikonian, after a valiant fight.[1] And yet Christian Armenia sometimes preferred association with Zoroastrian Iran, both because of past traditions and the exacting demands of Byzantium for conformity.[2]

The relations between Iran and the Roman and Byzantine empires comprised far more than wars and conflicts, even though, as is the case with news reports today, historians and chroniclers focus primarily on conflicts. Friendly relations, if cautious and mostly formal, prevailed between them for much of the time, and trade, travel and exchange of envoys continued in periods of peace. Byzantium and Iran realized their exceptional positions as the two major powers in Western Asia and recognized each other's legitimate interests. Their mutual appreciation and the responsibility they felt for maintaining international law and order find expression in Khusrau II's letter addressed to Emperor Maurice and quoted by Theophylactus Simocatta; in it he portrayed the two empires as the two great powers through which unruly and warlike nations were restrained and the lives of men were ordered.[3] They cooperated on matters of mutual interest, such as the joint maintenance of fortifications at the Caucasian Gates (Derbent) to bar nomadic invasions. Cultural and intellectual exchanges were not lacking either (see below, p. lxiv).

Eastern front

Iran's relations with her eastern neighbours are far more difficult to trace or define, because here we lack such written records as were made by the Romans, Byzantines, Armenians and Syriac Christians in the west. The nomadic people who were a continual threat to the stability of the Iranian state, and events which took place on the eastern borders, were as a rule of little or no import to the western writers and engaged their attention only when they affected events in the west. Even the rise of the Kushān empire practically escaped the notice of Roman historians, who briefly mentioned it only many years later.[4] We often hear, however, that the King of Kings had to abandon a siege or forego an

1 See pp. 146, 521.
2 See p. 523.
3 See pp. 577–8 for the citation of the pertinent part of the letter.
4 Cf. p. 82.

imminent success or agree to disadvantageous peace conditions because of disturbances on the eastern fronts. Thus, Mithradates I was drawn twice to the east in the middle of successful campaigns in the west in 148 and 141 B.C. to deal with nomadic invasions; Phraates II and Artabanus II both lost their lives in wars against the Sakas; Vologeses I abandoned Armenia in A.D. 59 in the face of a Roman threat, in order to meet the more dangerous menace of the Kushans in the east. Shāpūr II had to leave the western front to push back invading Huns in the east. Pērōz and Kavād had to contend with the Hephthalites, Khusrau I with the Kidarites and Hormazd IV with Turkic invaders on the eastern front. The bitter animosity between Iran and Turan, as depicted in the national epic, although rooted in the Iranian heroic age long before Zoroaster, owes much of its poignancy to the recurrence of such hostilities and the memory of repeated onslaughts of the eastern nomads in later periods. The anachronistic identification of the Turanians of old in the *Shāh-nāma* with the Turks, who first came into contact with Iran only in the 6th century, shows how later events and sentiments have coloured the accounts of earlier legends and enlivened them with feelings arising from fresh experiences.

The vast steppes of Central Asia have been traditionally a land of shifting nomads and a breeding ground for war-like and marauding tribes. The history of tribal movements in Central Asia, even the identity and ethnic components of the invading hordes, are not however always clear, but a general knowledge of major movements and their consequences may be gleaned from archaeological evidence and Chinese, classical, and Arabo-Persian sources.

In 176 or 174 B.C. the Hsiung-nu (probably the Huns) attacked the Yüeh-chih (the Tochari of the western sources) who inhabited the province of Kansu, northwest of China, setting in motion the nomad tribes of Central Asia. In about 160 B.C. the Yüeh-chih in turn pushed the Saka tribes westward towards Bactria. In about 130 B.C. these invaders struck at the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, overthrowing it in about 120–100 B.C. It appears that these Saka tribes drove on in different directions. One branch descended on Kāshghar and Khotan, and others, pushing south and east overran Herat, Drangiana, and Arachosia, reaching northwestern India, and in the process bringing by about 50 B.C. the petty states of the region under their suzerainty. Parthia and Hyrcania were also subjected to their onslaught and Phraates II and Artabanus II perished fighting them. Artabanus' successor, Mithradates

II, was however a monarch of unusual energy and ability. Soon afterwards he recovered Parthia and Hyrcania, driving the Sakas to the east and south into Drangiana, which came to be called Sacastene (Sakastāna, Sīstān), and making it his own vassal kingdom.

There are different interpretations of the movements, routes, and the identity and affiliation of the above tribes, particularly with regard to the Yüeh-chih. At any event, according to Chinese sources, one of the divisions of the Yüeh-chih, the Kushāns, later invaded Parthia and took possession of the Kabul valley. The date of this invasion is disputed, but soon thereafter[1] a mighty empire rose which controlled a large tract of land from Oxus to Indus, absorbing the territories of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian kingdoms. This was the most powerful state formed by the nomadic peoples on the eastern borders of Iran, lasting for some 180 years, until it was subdued by Ardashīr I in 225. Shāpūr II (309–79) appears to have taken still more decisive action against the Kushan domains, which were partly absorbed into Iranian provinces and partly taken over by the Huns, a new wave of invaders. Of the relations of the Parthians and the Sasanians with the Kushans we know very little.

Shāpūr II had to take stern measures to secure the eastern frontiers against the Hunnic (Chionite) tribes. He seems to have used these tribes in his campaigns in the west, after he had pacified them, since Ammianus Marcellinus (XIX.1.10) mentions the Chionite king, Grumbates, as Shāpūr's ally during his siege of Amida. Under Bahrām V (421–39), the threat to eastern frontiers became serious once again, this time presented by the Hephthalites, whose ethnic identity is again not entirely clear, although their written language was Middle Iranian.[2] They may possibly have been of Hunnic stock with a Saka ruling class and culture. They sustained severe defeat at the hand of the nonchalant-seeming and pleasure-loving Bahrām V and withdrew from the Iranian borders. Bahrām's successor, Ardashīr II (439–57) was less successful in dealing with nomadic invasions from the north and the menace posed by the Kidarites, connected apparently with the Hephthalites. The unfortunate Pērōz (459–84) lost his life and his army in battle against the Hephthalites, whereupon they overran and plundered eastern Iranian provinces and exacted tribute from Iran for a number of years; the situation was finally redressed under the able king, Kavād.

[1] See pp. 200ff. on the subject.

[2] See p. 614.

About this time a new ethnic element, the Turks, began to gather and gain strength near the Iranian borders, leading to the formation of a Turkic kingdom. The Turks brought pressure to bear on the Hephthalites, making it easier for the energetic Khusrau I to subdue the Hephthalites with their assistance, and to form common borders and an alliance with the Turks. His son Hormazd IV (579–90) had however to contend with a renewed threat of invading Turks on the eastern frontiers. He dispatched his famous general, Bahrām Chōbīn, who scored a resounding victory over them; major waves of Turkic invasion of Iran were not, however, to take place until Islamic times.

It must be borne in mind that the relationship between the settled lands and the steppe in eastern Iran was not always one of hostility, raids, and counter-raids. Apart from the economic exchanges which bound the two together, the Parthians and Sasanians often made use of the eastern nomads by recruiting them in their armies. As warlike peoples with a tradition of tribal chivalry, and having also an eye for material gain, the eastern nomads often responded readily to calls for assistance from Iranian princes engaged in internal struggles. The Parthian Artabanus III took shelter with tribes east of the Caspian before he was restored to kingship; the Sasanian Pērōz sought and received help from the Hephthalites against his brother Hormazd before his relations with them soured. Kavād, too, regained his kingdom with the assistance of the Hephthalites; and finally Bahrām Chōbīn chose to flee to the very Turks he had defeated, when his rebellion against Khusrau II failed. Such friendly relations sometimes were strengthened by bonds of marriage: Kavād married a daughter of the Hephthalite king (born to his sister who had been a captive with the Hephthalites), and Khusrau I wedded a Turkish princess who gave birth to his crown prince, Hormazd.

From this brief sketch it must be evident that despite many successful raids by the nomads and their periodic penetration into the eastern provinces, the Parthians and the Sasanians succeeded in erecting an effective barrier against their inroads; for more than seven centuries they afforded precious protection against disruption and chaos for the settled people of the Iranian plateau and its neighbouring lowlands. By virtue of their military control and political organization the two successive dynasties were the agents of prosperity and the guardians of civilization in the Middle East.

On the other hand, one need not doubt that the nomadic invasions brought some benefit, even though the historians dwelt almost entirely

on their destructive aspects. The invaders, by mingling with the settled people of Iran must have instilled fresh energy in them, and boosted their flagging stamina. Untempered by frequent challenge, Iranian culture would not have resisted for so long the debilitation and decline which appear to be the inevitable fate of all cultures.

Relations with other regions

The range of Iranian international relations includes also China, Armenia and Georgia, and the Arabs. Beyond the nomadic lands, the shifting kingdoms, and kaleidoscopic tribal confederations of Central Asia, lay the highly civilized Chinese state. Like Iran, China was preoccupied with pacifying the nomadic tribes to its north and west and interested in extending its control beyond its immediate borders. Chinese activities and advances in the west have generally been in direct proportion to the unity achieved in China and freedom from internal strife.

Although the Chinese had had indirect material contacts with the Iranian plateau from about the fourth millennium B.C.,[1] the earliest direct contact dates from the 2nd century B.C., when the able Han emperor Wu Ti (140–87 B.C.) sent an envoy, Ch'ang Ch'ien, to explore the regions to the far west and to seek an alliance with those Yüeh-chih who had reached Sogdiana and settled between the Oxus and Samarkand. Diplomatic and trade relations were established soon after between Parthia and China, and the first caravan from the east is said to have arrived in Parthia in 106 B.C., obviously after Mithradates II had pacified the Saka invaders. Friendly relations were also established with Sogdiana after two military expeditions by Wu Ti to Ta-yüan (apparently Farghāna), in the second of which the Chinese succeeded in breaking the resistance of Ta-yüan.[2]

The Chinese remained active in and often controlled the Tarim basin through the 5th century A.D. Under the Sui, and later the T'ang, the Chinese pressed westward again, and between 635 and 648 they brought Yārkand, Kāshghar, Khotan, Kuchā, Turfan, and Karashahr under their dominion. In the light of growing Chinese authority under the T'ang and Chinese control over much of Central Asia,[3] we can well believe that Pērōz, son of the last Sasanian king, appealed to the Chinese

[1] See p. 537.
[2] See p. 542.
[3] See pp. 544, 547.

court for assistance against the conquering Arabs, as recorded in the Chinese sources. The fame of the Chinese "Khāghāns" in early Persian literature and frequent references to envoys to and from China and to exquisite Chinese art, in particular to painting, reflect relations between the two countries which reached their climax in the 7th and 8th centuries. It must be remembered, however, that "China" in this context is a rather vague term, referring often to Chinese Turkistan and the adjoining lands under the Chinese control, rather than to China proper.

Iran and the Caucasus were linked from ancient times. In the Achaemenian period, Armenia and Georgia came under the suzerainty of the Persian King of Kings, and the Armenian army fought loyally on the side of Darius III when Alexander invaded Persia. In Seleucid times the Caucasus was divided into several tributary principalities, which like the rest of Western Asia came under the impact of Hellenism and participated in the expanded east–west trade. The administrative language, however, continued to be Iranian, which, following the model of the Achaemenians, was written ideographically in Aramaic.

Mithradates II, in the course of his campaigns against Rome, brought Armenia under his control. As the Parthians turned their attention to the west, and as the Romans expanded their power in the east, Armenia and Georgia became victims of the political and military ambitions of the two superpowers. Many Roman generals, Lucullus, Pompey, Crassus, Mark Antony and Trajan among them, campaigned in Armenia, as did a number of the Parthian, and later, the Sasanian kings. Finally, in A.D. 66, an Arsacid prince, Tiridates, was crowned king of Armenia following an understanding with Rome. The event marked a new chapter in Armenian history and its relations with Parthia, for it established a tradition of designating one of the highest ranking Arsacid princes as the Great King of Armenia. This tradition gave rise to an Arsacid dynasty in Armenia. Closely allied to the Arsacids of Iran and loyal to the Parthian King of Kings, the Armenian Arsacids opposed the Sasanians when they rose against the Parthians, and maintained a rather hostile attitude towards the new dynasty until their fall in 428. In eastern Georgia, too, an Arsacid dynasty, related to the Armenian one, ruled for over a century until it was replaced in the 4th century by the Chosroids of the Iranian noble family of Mihrān.

The kinship of the Arsacids of Iran, Armenia, and Georgia was symbolic of the similarity of customs, manners, dress, and the way of life in these

countries. Strabo (XI.13.9), aware of these similarities, draws attention to the Median origin of their affinities.

Iranian relations with the Arabs, culminating in the Islamic conquest of Persia, have a long history, dating back at least to Achaemenian times; Darius I includes a satrapy called Arabaya in the list of his realms. After Alexander the Arabs of northwestern Arabia passed under the sovereignty of the Seleucids. Then, when the Parthians captured Babylon, most of Mesopotamia came under their aegis and a number of Arab frontiers and principalities began to be established as part of a defence line against the Romans, who were moving eastwards and were also using the Arabs as auxiliaries. An Arab principality was established in the 2nd century B.C. in Characene (Charax or Mesene, in southeastern Iraq and Khūzistān) by Hyspaosines, who like some of his successors bears an Iranian name. This vassal kingdom of the Parthians continued as a buffer zone between the Arabs of the desert and the settled lands to the north and east until it was brought under direct Sasanian rule by Ardashīr I.

With Mesene annexed and Hatra, the prosperous, fortified border city, destroyed by Shāpūr I, the new city of Ḥīra, west of the Euphrates in central Iraq, became the focus of a vassal Arab dynasty, the Lakhmids. They served as the Sasanian instrument to contain the Arab tribes on the fringes of Iranian borders, and also to counter the Ghassanids of Syria, a vassal dynasty of the Romans. During periods of political weakness in Iran, however, marauding Arab tribes, spurred on by the need for better pastures or in search of booty or glory, made inroads into Persia, as when Shāpūr II was still a minor, and again under Hormazd IV, when the country was beset by dangers from all sides. Khusrau II dismissed the Lakhmid ruler in 602 and a Persian *marzubān* assumed *de facto* government of Ḥīra. Khusrau II's elimination of the Lakhmid dynasty has generally been regarded as a political blunder which contributed a few years later to the defeat of a combined force of the Hirans and the Persians in the battle of Dhū Qār, famous in the annals of the Arabs as showing for the first time a real weakness in the defence of the Iranian borders. A generation later this incident instilled confidence in the Arabs to attack Persia under the banner of Islam. But as long as the Sasanians still possessed some inner strength the Arab raiders were held in check, usually with the assistance of loyal Arab tribes, and often made to pay for their raids.[1]

[1] See p. 603.

Sasanian control in eastern Arabia extended to ʻUmān (Mazūn in Iranian,)[1] which was affiliated with Iran from ancient times and inhabited by Iranian-speaking people. It figures among the Iranian provinces as Mazūn in Shāpūr I's Great Inscription at the Kaʻba-yi Zardusht[2] and served in Sasanian times as an outpost, guarding the strait of Hormuz and the sea trade route from India. The Sasanians tried to extend their sphere of influence in Arabia further west, aiming even at Ḥijāz for both economic and political reasons. According to Ṭabarī (I., p. 985), in about 531 Khusrau I appointed the Lakhmid al-Mundhir III over the regions of Baḥrain, ʻUmān and Yamāma, as far west as Ṭā'if and over the rest of Ḥijāz. "It seems, indeed, that as part of the struggle with Byzantium, Persia had well before the 6th century attempted to exert some influence even in Mecca and Yathrib (the later Medina) via the recognized Ḥīra-Mecca commercial and cultural highway."[3]

During the reign of Khusrau I, Persian influence extended also to South Arabia and the Yemen, following internal strife and religious dispute in the old kingdom of Ḥimyar. Saif b. Dhī Yazan, who headed a nationalist movement against the occupying Ethiopians, made an appeal to Khusrau I, which led eventually to the conquest of Yemen by the Persian general, Vahrīz, and the establishment of a vassal kingdom there. A Persian occupation force remained however in the Yemen, exerting a considerable measure of control; with the rise of Islam it apparently went over to the new religion and aided Muḥammad, who came to an agreement with the Persian governor. The descendants of the Persians were recognized for some time in early Islam as a distinct, seemingly aristocratic group, called *abnā'* "sons".[4]

CULTURAL EXCHANGES

During the course of her history, Iran has shown herself to be always ready to learn from other nations with surprising flexibility. The evolution of Iranian culture owes a great deal to Mesopotamian, Levantine, Anatolian, Greek, Arab, and Central Asian peoples. Eclecticism, a major aspect of Iranian civilization, has not however hampered the development of a distinct culture. Within the context of

[1] See Marquart, *Ērānšahr* (p. 1331), pp. 43–4.
[2] Cf. Maricq, "Res Gestae", p. 337, no. 27.
[3] C. E. Bosworth, p. 600.
[4] See p. 607; and Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī* (p. 1289), p. 220.

Middle Eastern civilization Iran emerges with not only an unmistakable but also a notable cultural profile, marked by imaginative innovations and tasteful syntheses. She is distinguished above all by her characteristic religious thinking, her art forms, and her literature. Her contribution and influence can be seen also in the fields of material culture, administration, warfare, etiquette and manners, and court procedures.

The oldest cultural influences on Iran in historical times came from Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Elam, and Syria; but by the Parthian period these influences, whether concerned with material culture, time reckoning, or the art of writing, had become so much a part of the Middle Eastern common inheritance that it was neither easy nor judicious to isolate and identify them as foreign. In the meantime, Mesopotamia and her sister societies had entered a period of decline and had come under the aegis of younger, ascending nations.

The major cultural influence during the earlier part of the period under review was Greek, which spread to all parts of Achaemenian lands by Alexander's conquest. It was further diffused during the Seleucid rule and continued to affect some aspects of Iranian life even after the Seleucids had left Iran. The Greek presence in Iran and its impact on Iranian life have already been discussed. It must be remembered however that although the Greek influence was considerable in terms of scope and variety, in terms of depth and durability it was less so. The Greeks of the Hellenistic period, despite their technical, artistic, and scientific superiority, brought no inspiring ideology, and the Zoroastrian religion, which embodied Iranian ideas and ideals, remained the paramount source of national inspiration. In the end Iran proved inhospitable to the Greek way of life and thinking, and the Iranian spirit prevailed. "The dominant historical fact in Western Asia in ancient times", wrote Cumont, "was the opposition between the Greco-Roman and Persian civilizations."[1] Out of the ashes of the Achaemenian and Seleucid empires the Parthians and their successors, the Sasanians, forged one of the major civilizations of Western Asia. It owed a good deal to prior and contemporaneous civilizations, but it also influenced the culture of a number of nations in varying degrees.

We may consider first some of the areas in which the Iranians benefited from the contributions of the nations other than ancient Middle Eastern and Greek.

[1] *Oriental Religions*, p. 135.

External Influences

Influences from India centre primarily on Buddhism. Under Aśoka (264–230 B.C.) Buddhism, which made the greatest single Indian contribution to the cultural and spiritual life of the eastern and north-eastern Iranians, was planted as far north as the Oxus. In the next few centuries the Greeks, the Sakas, and the Parthians were the main actors in the entangled history of these regions; they were all affected by Buddhism, and in turn their influence was brought to bear on the development of northern Buddhist art and thought. Buddhism was reinforced and spread further in eastern Iranian lands through the patronage of the Kushāns, whose empire reached the zenith of its power under Kanishka (A.D. 128–51).[1] The ancient Iranian kingdom of Khotan, which had received Buddhism from India, developed into a centre of Mahāyāna Buddhist learning and contributed considerably to its propagation. In eastern Iran Buddhism flourished in such centres as Begram, Kandahār, Bāmiyān, Baghlān, Hadda and Balkh, as well as later in parts of Transoxiana, introducing religious ideas and practices divergent from the Mazdayasnian religion. An art form – Gandhāran art – inspired by Buddhism but borrowing iconographic and stylistic features from Iranian and Greek art, developed in Afghanistan and northwestern India,[2] adorning Buddhist temples and monasteries in the region. The influence of Buddhist thought is seen in some aspects of Manichaean religion,[3] and it is likely that doctrines such as incarnation and transmigration of souls, held in Islamic times by neo-Mazdakite, some extremist Shīʿī sects, and mystics,[4] represent an Indian influence dating back to Partho-Sasanian times.

Buddhism came under attack in Iran by the zealous Sasanians, and Buddhists were persecuted.[5] The Buddhists however survived in northwestern India and eastern Iran despite the pressures and persecutions they suffered at the hands of the conquering Hephthalites in the 5th century. Their demise in Iran came with the advance of the Islamic armies in the 8th and 9th centuries. Buddhist temples (*vihāra*, Pers. *bahār*) and statues are remembered in Persian literature as epitomes of charm and beauty, and *but* "idol" (from Buddha) is another word for a beauty or the beloved.[6]

[1] According to A. D. H. Bivar; see pp. 200ff.
[2] Cf. I. Lyons and H. Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistān* (New York, 1957), p. 40.
[3] See pp. 968, 986. [4] See pp. 1001ff. [5] See pp. 615, 956.
[6] Melikian-Chirvani, "L'évocation" and "Recherches" (p. 1359).

Iranian interest in Indian thought and sciences in Sasanian times is evident from translations made into Middle Persian of Indian works on mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, as well as works of imaginative and didactic literature such as the *Pančatantra*, a collection of fables. In *The Letter of Tansar* the Indians are characterized as remarkable for their intellect,[1] and the *Shāh-nāma* reflects cultural exchanges between Iran and India in the story of the mutual challenge presented by the Indian king and Khusrau I through the invention of chess by the Indians and backgammon (*nard*) by the Iranians.[2] A number of Indian works, including the *Kalīla wa Dimna* (based on the *Pančatantra*), were translated in early Islamic times from Middle Persian into Arabic and contributed to the development of Islamic *adab* literature.

Chinese contributions to Iranian civilization were effected mostly through trade. The main item of trade from China was of course silk. The Silk Road left China at Tun-huang and, soon after reaching Kāshghar, divided into a northerly route which reached Marv after passing through Farghāna and Samarkand, and a southerly one which crossed the Pāmirs, passed through Bactria, and joined the northerly route at Marv. The road then continued to the Parthian capital, Hecatompylos, and to Ecbatana, leading finally to Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the Tigris; Syria and the Roman East could be reached from there. Some trade was also carried on through Indian ports. Chinese silk appears to have been known in the Achaemenian empire by the 5th century B.C. Beside silk, imports from China included paper and cast iron.[3] The secret of sericulture and the technique of silk production reached Iran in the 5th century A.D., and Iranian silk material was exported to China itself about the 7th century.

The impact of Chinese art in Central Asia and Iran follows an ascending curve during the T'ang period, affecting painting and pottery in particular. It culminated in the Islamic period following the Mongol invasion, when Chinese models and motives influenced Persian design, and the Chinese manner of depicting clouds, mountains, trees, and facial features was emulated and absorbed.

From the Romans, who excelled in civil engineering and construction methods, the Iranians learned a good deal about the building of roads and military fortifications, city planning, and mosaic decorations. Not

[1] Minuvi ed., p. 41; tr., p. 64. Cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 10, 139.
[2] Moscow ed., VIII, pp. 206ff.
[3] See pp. 551, 622.

only were Roman architects sometimes brought to help with building projects in Iran, but more often Roman captives and the populations carried off from conquered cities in the Roman East were put to work in the construction of cities, bridges, palaces, and the like. Thus was the city of Veh-Antiok-Shāpūr (Gundēshāpūr) built under Shāpūr I. This tactic was also used to erect a dam for a water reservoir near Shushtar, still called Band-i Qaiṣar ("Caesar's dam"), and to build the palace of Bīshāpūr, under the same king. Romans were employed in the construction of Ērān-Khwarra-Shāpūr on the site of Susa under Shāpūr II, and in the building of Veh-Antiok-Khusrau or Rūmagān, a component city of Ctesiphon, under Khusrau I. The system of limes erected by Shāpūr II against the marauding tribes in Hyrcania is possibly another example of Roman influence.[1]

A possible case of Roman influence in the field of religion concerns Bundos, who according to Malalas of Antioch was the founder of a new religious doctrine later adopted by Kavād in the 5th century, namely Mazdakism.[2] Bundos is said to have dwelt for some time in Rome under Diocletian, where syncretistic religions had a vogue. Mazdakite teachings are remarkably close in some respects to the doctrines of Carpocrates of Alexandria, who also lived under Diocletian, and whose teachings may have influenced Mazdakite doctrine.[3] We must remember however that the syncretistic religions, such as that of Carpocrates, had themselves been affected to a certain extent by Iranian religious thought (see below).

Cultural exchanges between Iran and Byzantium were not hindered by their frequent hostilities. There was mutual borrowing or adaptation of techniques in the military field and in crafts, and exchanges of fashion in dress and ornaments took place, though to a limited degree. In the intellectual sphere, Byzantium, being the centre for the study of Hellenistic philosophy and having Greek as its vernacular, was a source of knowledge for Iran. Shāpūr I and Khusrau I are known to have encouraged translations from Greek in science and philosophy, which in this context could only refer to Hellenistic works, not to genuine Byzantine works, for these were thoroughly imbued with a Christian spirit. The similarity in many respects between the administrative patterns and fiscal practices of the two empires has often led to the

[1] See pp. 137, 563, 570; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 151; Pigulevskaya, *Villes* (p. 1325), pp. 168, 171, 181, 236ff.

[2] See pp. 995–6.

[3] See p. 1020; and Klima, *Mazdak* (p. 1363), pp. 209ff.

belief that they were copied or adapted one from the other. In particular some historians have held that the reforms of Khusrau I were modelled on the economic and political reforms introduced by Diocletian, or that Khusrau's uniting of military and civilian powers in his chief administrators followed the pattern employed in Byzantine provincial government. On the other hand, Diocletian is said to have borrowed the court ceremonies and royal trappings of the Sasanians. As has been cogently argued in this volume,[1] none of these conclusions rests upon firm grounds, and such similarities and reciprocal influences cannot be reduced to a simple case of borrowing.

It may be noted that Iranian popular romances and folk epics, many of which are rooted in pre-Islamic Iran, reveal considerable appreciation of Roman and Byzantine courts, wealth and manners. In them frequently the emperors of Rūm[2] appear as worthy and powerful opponents, rūmī princesses as love-inspiring beauties, and rūmī spies as clever agents, to be outwitted only by their Iranian counterparts.

Iranian influences

The Partho-Sasanian was a distinct civilization backed successively by two mighty dynasties. It exerted considerable cultural influence on the societies with which it came into contact.

As "the highest expression of Persian genius",[3] Zoroastrianism constitutes also the most significant Iranian influence. Since in the absence of concrete and compelling evidence it is difficult to trace with precision or certainty the exchange of religious and philosophical ideas, reciprocal influences in these fields between Iran and some other nations have been the subject of some controversy. Of course it is not uncommon for similar circumstances to give rise independently to similar ideas; nevertheless the striking resemblance between some characteristic and persistent Iranian doctrines and those of the Judaeo-Christian tradition has persuaded a number of scholars that the latter owe much to the former.[4] Some influences go back to the Achaemenian

[1] See pp. 587ff.; cf. p. 153.

[2] Generally meaning Byzantium, retaining perhaps also a vague and distant memory of the Roman state.

[3] Cf. Cumont, *Oriental Religions*, p. 136.

[4] See A. V. W. Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies* (New York, 1928; repr. 1965), Ch. 13, pp. 203ff. and J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 70ff, for a review of the subject and sources; see also Cumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 138ff.; Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung* (p. 1351), Ch. 7, pp. 517ff.

period, when the Babylonian Exile was terminated and the Jewish population came under the protection of the Persian kings. With the advance of the Parthians towards Mesopotamia and Syria, and the establishment of Ctesiphon as their capital, Iranian influence found a new base of support and affected the largely Semitic population of Parthian western marches. The doctrines considered to have been inspired by or borrowed from Iran are diverse and range from theological, such as the dualism between good and evil or between light and darkness, the belief in angels and archangels (corresponding to Zoroastrian *yazata*s and *aməša.spənta*s) and in Satan as the epitome of evil and the adversary of God (corresponding to Ahriman), the notion of paradise and hell, and the doctrine of future life and the continued existence of the soul; to ethical, such as reward and punishment by divine justice; to eschatological, such as resurrection of the dead and the last judgement. Of particular interest in this respect are Iranian apocalyptic beliefs, prominent in Zoroastrian writings, namely, millennial periods and events, the doctrine of the Saviour (Sōshyant), and the destruction of the wicked and the renovation of the world at the end of time.

The influences of Iranian religion appear to have been intensified during the Parthian period, when the relations with the Jews were friendly and Iranian political power in Mesopotamia dominant. To quote Mary Boyce on the subject:

> Gradually many of Zoroaster's fundamental doctrines became disseminated throughout the region, from Egypt to the Black Sea: namely that there is a supreme God who is the Creator; that an evil power exists which is opposed to him, and not under his control; that he has emanated many lesser divinities to help combat this power; that he has created this world for a purpose, and that in its present state it will have an end; that this end will be heralded by the coming of a cosmic Saviour, who will help to bring it about; that meantime heaven and hell exist, with an individual judgment to decide the fate of each soul at death; that at the end of time there will be a resurrection of the dead and a Last Judgement, with annihilation of the wicked; and that thereafter the kingdom of God will come upon earth, and the righteous will enter into it as into a garden (a Persian word for which is 'paradise'), and be happy there in the presence of God for ever, immortal themselves in body as well as soul.
>
> These doctrines all came to be adopted by various Jewish schools in the post-Exilic period, for the Jews were one of the peoples, it seems, most open to Zoroastrian influences – a tiny minority, holding staunchly to their own beliefs, but evidently admiring their Persian benefactors, and finding congenial

elements in their faith. Worship of the one Supreme God, and belief in the coming of a Messiah or Saviour, together with adherence to a way of life which combined moral and spiritual aspirations with a strict code of behaviour (including purity laws) were all matters in which Judaism and Zoroastrianism were in harmony; and it was this harmony, it seems, reinforced by the respect of a subject people for a great protective power, which allowed Zoroastrian doctrines to exert their influence. The extent of this influence is best attested, however, by Jewish writings of the Parthian period, when Christianity and the Gnostic faiths, as well as northern Buddhism, all likewise bore witness to the profound effect which Zoroaster's teachings had had throughout the lands of the Achaemenian empire."[1]

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls stimulated renewed discussion of the Iranian influence in post-Exilic rabbinical and apochryphal writings and the emergence of Christian doctrines.[2] The similarity between the contents of *Manual of Discipline* regarding the two spirits and Zoroastrian doctrines is striking: The spirit of truth has its abode in the realm of light and has domination over the sons of righteousness; the spirit of error has originated from darkness, has dominion over the sons of error, and tempts the sons of righteousness into transgression; but God has ordained a time for the destruction of error, when he will destroy it for ever and the truth will prevail. The affinity of such doctrines with those of the Zurvanites has not escaped the attention of scholars.[3]

Zurvanite doctrines are also invoked in discussions of the Iranian share in the development of gnostic religions, which had a considerable vogue in the Middle East during the Hellenistic period and after. The gnostic movement essentially espouses a rather pessimistic view of the world. In its more typical form it postulates a remote and aloof supreme deity who leaves the direction of the world to lesser creative principles of dubious benevolence. It envisages the redemption of the soul from the shackles of matter or worldly existence by a divine or divinely inspired redeemer through illuminating knowledge (*gnosis*).

It is true that such views differ in outlook from Gāthic Zoroastrianism and the optimistic view of the world reflected in known Zoroastrian writings. Therefore a number of scholars have emphasized the non-Iranian, particularly Greek, ancestry of gnostic ideas. On the other

[1] *Zoroastrians*, pp. 76–7.

[2] Cf. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, pp. 62ff.; *idem*, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule" (p. 1361), cols. 533ff.

[3] See Duchesne-Guillemin, *op. cit.*, pp. 91ff.

hand, some historians of religion have drawn attention to the close relationship of gnostic doctrines with those of the Zurvanites, pointing particularly to the Parthian sphere of influence as the cradle of the gnostic movement.[1]

Manichaeism, which was conceived in a Semitic environment within the Iranian empire, and Mazdakism, which was proclaimed and propagated in Iran, were both gnostic religions strongly affected by Zoroastrian doctrines.[2] They in turn became vehicles for the spread of Iranian concepts outside Iran; Manichaeism, in particular, travelled far and wide, from North Africa to China, and was attacked in Christian lands as a Persian heresy.

Iran also provided the Roman empire with what Franz Cumont has called its "most important cult of paganism"[3] – that of Mithra. Although Mithraic mysteries as practised in the Roman empire had little in common with what we know about Mithra from the Avesta, there is no doubt that at the foundation of Mithraism lay the Iranian Mithra worship.[4] With the identification of the figures other than Mithra in Mithraic representations with Iranian deities or demons, notably Arimanus (Ahriman),[5] the Iranian origin of Roman Mithraism becomes abundantly evident. The stages of the development of Roman Mithraism are however not entirely clear.[6] Some of the Iranian aristocratic colonies in Asia Minor, notably in Commagene, Cappadocia, and Pontus, continued the practice of their Iranian religion even after Alexander's conquest, but in time adapted it to their hellenized environment. It is generally assumed that it was from these Anatolian monarchies that the cult of Mithra spread to the West, when in the 1st century they were absorbed by Rome. E. Renan's statement concerning the importance of Mithraism among Roman pagan religions has often been quoted: "If Christianity had been checked in its growth by some deadly disease, the world would have become Mithraic";[7] and

[1] See pp. 836ff. for a view favouring a Greek origin; 899ff. on Zurvanism; G. Widengren, "Der iranische Hintergrund der Gnosis", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* IV (1952), pp. 97–114; *idem*, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, pp. 62ff; *idem*, "Les origines du gnosticisme" (p. 1362), pp. 28ff.; Duchesne-Guillemin, *Western Response*, pp. 96ff.

[2] See pp. 972ff.

[3] *Oriental Religions*, p. 140.

[4] Cumont, *Textes et monuments* I (p. 1347), pp. 5ff., 223ff.

[5] See Zaehner, "Postscript to *Zurvan*" (p. 1354), p. 237; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Ahriman et le Dieu suprême dans les mystères de Mithra", *Numen* II (1955), pp. 190–5; *idem*, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1953), p. 128; Gershevitch, *Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (p. 1306), pp. 61ff.

[6] See pp. 853ff.

[7] *Marc-Aurèle* (Paris, 1882), p. 579, *apud* Cumont, *Oriental Religions*, p. 160.

Cumont, the foremost historian of Mithraism, wrote, "Never...had Europe a narrower escape from becoming Asiatic than when Diocletian officially recognized Mithras as the protector of the reconstructed empire."[1] Mithraism provided an important vehicle for the penetration of Iranian thought and moral values in the Roman empire.[2] "Of all the Oriental cults", wrote Cumont, "none was so severe as Mithraism, none attained an equal moral elevation, none could have so strong a hold on mind and heart."[3]

The connection of Mithraism with Christianity and the effects of Mithra worship on the development of Christian doctrines have been the subject of much debate,[4] and many Christian beliefs and rituals including the concept of a God incarnate as divine Saviour, have been held to have derived from the Mithraic religion.[5]

A more direct and unambiguous Iranian religious influence can be seen in the spread of Iranian religion in the Caucasus and eastern Anatolia. Iranian colonies in Asia Minor and their agency of spreading Iranian doctrines further west have already been mentioned.[6] Ancient Armenia, which was generally thought to have been strongly influenced by Mazdaism, is held by some recent researchers to have been in fact Zoroastrian and to have adhered to that religion until the 4th century, when it became Christian.[7] The prevalence of Mazdaism also in ancient Georgia has been attested by archaeological and linguistic evidence. The community of religious belief and outlook between Iran and Armenia and Georgia is reflected in such common deities as Anahit (Anāhitā) patron goddess of Armenia, Aramazd (Ahura Mazda), Mithra (later Arm. form: Meher), Vahagan (Vərəthraghna) in Armenia; and Armazi (Ahura Mazda) in Georgia. The cult of fire in Armenia and Georgia is amply attested by archeological and literary evidence. Zoroastrian demonology, too, is echoed in Armenian and Georgian names of Iranian origin for malevolent and monstrous creatures (Arm. *dev*, Av. *daēva-* "false god, demon"; *druzh*, Av. *drug-* "personification of deceit and the lie, demon"; *parik*, Av. *pairikā-* "female demon";

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

[2] Cf. Widengren, "The Mithraic Mysteries" (p. 1351), pp. 433ff.

[3] *Oriental Religions*, p. 159.

[4] See Duchesne-Guillemin, *Western Response*, pp. 86ff. for a brief survey of the question and a bibliography.

[5] Cf. G. Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religions-Geschichte* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 105ff.

[6] See pp. 100ff.

[7] This is the thesis of Dr James Russell's doctoral dissertation, "Zoroastrianism in Armenia", University of London, 1981.

jatuk, Av. *yātū-* "sorcerer"; Ahrmn, Haraman(i)/Xaramani, Av. *angra.mainyu-*, Mid. Pers. Ahriman).[1] Friendly relations and cultural exchanges began however to weaken somewhat with the conversion of Armenia and Georgia to Christianity and the resulting attraction toward Byzantium.

The rigidity of the state Church and the prevailing restrictions and censorship in both Byzantium and Sasanian Persia discouraged the free exchange of ideas. In neither empire was apostasy or heresy easily tolerated, particularly when it had political overtones and aroused suspicion of support from the other side. And yet ideas are not easy to contain, and reciprocal infiltration of religious thought from across the border manifested itself in the advances (if limited) of Christianity in Iran[2] and Manichaean heresies in Byzantium.

Iranian religious influences during the Sasanian period have been detected also among the Arabs. The endeavour of the Sasanians to extend their control as far as Mecca and Medina, as well as the survival of the Persian abnā' in the Yemen have already been noted. It is natural to assume that Iranian presence and control in much of Arabia exposed some of the Arabs to the religious thinking and practices of the Iranians. Some historians of religion have pointed out the similarity between Iranian beliefs and some Koranic concepts such as the angels, the day of individual and final judgement, the resurrection of the dead, the Bridge, and heaven and hell, and have indicated their borrowing through the Judeo-Christian tradition, with which the prophet of Islam was familiar. Others have seen a trace of Zurvanism in the notion of fatalism expressed in the *jāhiliyya* poetry.[3]

One particular source of religious conceptual influence from Iran appears to have been the Mazdakite movement, which reached its peak under Kavād in the early 6th century. According to certain Islamic sources some Arabs in Mecca adopted the doctrine of Mazdak, and at the rise of Islam there was still a group in Mecca recognized as Mazdakites (Zanādiqa).[4] It is also reported that the expedition sent by Khusrau I to aid Saif b. Dhī Yazan included a number of prisoners, to whose fate the king was indifferent. If this be true, the prisoners were probably the Mazdakites persecuted by Khusrau. Although such reports are subject to doubt, some credibility is lent to them by the appearance among early extreme Shī'īs (the *ghulāt*) of non-Islamic, neo-Mazdakite ideas; these range from belief in an inner meaning of the scriptures and

[1] See pp. 534ff. [2] See pp. 933ff. [3] See p. 609. [4] See p. 600.

a continuity of revelation to the incarnation, occultation, and return of divine leaders.[1] It is likely that the ranks of the ghulāt were infiltrated by neo-Mazdakites in disguise, or at least by the Arabs and *mawālī* who had been affected by the Mazdakite doctrine. Be that as it may, there is little doubt that Mazdakite religious thought, which found a breathing space after the fall of the Sasanians, did not disappear without leaving traces in sectarian Islam.

The impact of Iranian religion obviously was not confined to the nations in the west, but extended to the east as well. If Buddhism was an Indian gift, its subsequent development in many areas, particularly in eastern Iran, bears the stamp of Greco-Iranian influence. It was largely due to the religious temperament and inclinations of the Iranian Buddhists that Buddhism, originally rather abstract and without images, developed in its northern form a rich iconography with representations of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, gods, demons, etc.[2] Among the Iranian influences on Buddhism may be counted the concept of Buddha Mitreya, the most famous of the Bodhisattvas, who has messianic features reminiscent of the Zoroastrian Sōshyant.[3]

The Iranian influence on Buddhism is intimately linked with the effect of Iran on the Gandhāran art and on the later stages of Buddhist art. It is to be noticed first in the Iranian elements and decorative forms in the Gandhāran Buddhist iconography, emanating chiefly from Bāmiyān in Afghanistan and passing through Central Asia to China, providing a model iconography for Mahāyāna Buddhism. "From about the middle of the 4th century, Iranian pictorial methods supplanted Gandhāran models as a source of the new images required by the Mahayanist expansion of the Buddhist pantheon."[4] Further effects of artistic communication with Iran may be seen in the wall paintings at the caves of Tun-huang, where "one may speak of a Sino-Iranian school of painting subsisting from the early 5th until nearly the end of the 6th century".[5] Iranian influences are visible also in Bodhisattva images with head ribbons and broad crossing scarfs, often seen in cave temples of Yun-kang from the 5th century.[6] The Iranian impact on Buddhist iconography of China continues to the end of Sasanian times and

[1] See p. 1001f.
[2] Cf. p. 619.
[3] See p. 953.
[4] W. Watson, p. 555.
[5] *Idem*, p. 556.
[6] Seiichi Mizuko, "Iranian Influence in Buddhist Iconography", *SPA*, pp. 3249ff.

through the T'ang period, and is further seen in some Japanese wall paintings and panels, such as the three panels of the T'ang period preserved in the Shōsōin.[1]

Among the Iranian nations, the Sogdians took the lead not only in trade with Central Asia and the Far East, but also as transmitters of ideas and the agents of cultural exchange. As Manichaeans they converted the Uigur Turks, among others, to Manichaeism and introduced the religion of Mānī all the way through the Tarim Basin to China. As Christians, their missionaries were active in propagating Nestorian Christianity. They also introduced Zoroastrianism into China. The Chinese court recognized Zoroastrianism in the early 6th century, and a number of Zoroastrian temples were built in western China in the early T'ang period. The Chinese were anxious to propitiate the Central Asian peoples at their borders, and Zoroastrianism, as one of the religions of Central Asian people, was spared persecution, until 845, when it fell victim to xenophobic sentiments in China, and its recognition was withdrawn.

Manichaeism was introduced into China in the late 7th century and enjoyed official recognition as long as the Uigur Turks, who had been converted to it, were respectably strong. With the decline of Uigur power in the 9th century, Manichaeism lost official support in China and went underground, to disappear almost entirely by the 14th century. The Manichaeans are thought to have introduced China to a number of mathematical and astronomical ideas from the Iranian sphere.

As for Iranian contributions in other fields, Iranian artistic influences on the art of the Fertile Crescent and on the northern Buddhist art have already been noted. Iranian influences on Rome in material culture, although comparatively somewhat limited, were far from negligible. The Romans came to admire the Parthian method of warfare in the plains and borrowed both the technique of their cavalier archers and the actual weapons and armour for men and horses.[2] They also learned from the Iranians in the fields of agriculture and irrigation; various fruits and plants, including rhubarb, assafoetida, pistachio, peach and apricot (the latter two of Chinese origin), were adopted directly or indirectly from Iran.[3] Iranian influences were often promoted through trade. The Parthians and Sasanians were particularly careful to safe-

[1] Ryoichi Hayashi, "The Iranian Animal Style on the Treasures of the Shōsōin Repository", *SPA*, pp. 3275ff.

[2] See pp. 562f.

[3] See pp. 562–4 for probable Roman borrowings from Iran.

guard the security of the trade routes, and their military power was put to excellent use to secure the economic benefits resulting from the safety of caravan trade. Iranian artifacts and agricultural products travelled far and wide, as far as Rome in the west and China in the east. Chinese imports from Iran or through Iran included woollen material and rugs, precious stones and aromatics. Persian brocades are said to have competed with the native products among the fashionable Chinese at the court.[1]

The Central Asian satrapies of Sogdiana, Bactria, and Chorasmia, as well as some other eastern satrapies of the Achaemenian empire, passed from tribal into urban societies much later than the Medes and the Persians.[2] In time they evolved into civilizing agents for the wave of fresh tribes – the Sakas, the Hephthalites, and the Turks – who moved westward. The Sogdians in particular, as already mentioned, played an important role in transmitting elements of Iranian culture to various peoples of Central Asia through trade and religious missionaries. Their trading posts and merchant colonies stretched all the way from their native land along the trade routes through Central Asia into China. As businessmen they earned the reputation of being keen and skilful, and they were largely responsible for the fame of Persian wealth and luxury.

A major indicator of Iranian cultural influences is the linguistic borrowings from Iranian. Nowhere is this more evident than in the rich layers of Iranian vocabulary in Armenian and, to a lesser extent, Georgian. These layers, which date largely from the Parthian period, are of considerable assistance for a better understanding of Iranian linguistics and cultural history.

Iranian words borrowed into Aramaic and Syriac likewise mirror the cultural influences exerted on the speakers of those languages by the Iranians during their many centuries of contact.[3] Numerous Iranian loanwords in the language of the Mandaeans match the extent of the Iranian influence in the gnostic religion of this baptist sect in southern Iraq and Khūzistān.[4] The Arabs, too, borrowed a number of words directly or via Syriac from Middle Persian. They mostly reflect aspects of Iranian life which had impressed the Arabs, although the date of their borrowing cannot be always determined because of the scarcity of written Arabic documents prior to Islam.[5] Many Arab poets of fame

[1] See p. 548f. [2] See p. 234.
[3] See Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, pp. 25ff.
[4] See *ibid.*, pp. 89ff. for a listing of and comments on these loan words.
[5] See p. 610 for some other borrowings.

frequented the court of the Lahkmids seeking patronage; and references to aspects of the Persian imperial court and aristocratic refinements such as royal armour, dress and crown, royal jewels, fine material, and musical instruments are not rare in their poetry.

In the east the extensive trade and missionary activities of the Sogdians was reflected in the wide use of their language in Central Asia. Sogdian remained the *lingua franca* of Central Asia for many centuries, particularly with the Uigur Turks, whose older inscriptions are in Sogdian. The Uigur script, which served as a model for Mongolian, was adapted from the Sogdian alphabet, and words and titles abound in Uigur which reveal Sogdian religious and cultural influence. The word *kent* "town" (as in Tashkent), from Sogd. *kniδh*, widely used among the Turks, conveys the Iranian origin of urbanism in western Central Asia. Some words for weights and measures, borrowed from the Sogdians by the Turks (e.g. Uig. *batman* "a unit of weight" and *stir* "(stamped) coin") betray the Sogdian influence in regulating trade and introducing a money economy among the Turks.[1] In more easterly regions strong Chinese influences mingled with the Iranian.

CONCLUSION

The millennium which began with the collapse of the Achaemenian empire and ended with the advent of Islam is one of the most significant in the history of the Iranian-speaking peoples. It is a period during which the Iranians, who had been defeated by a military conquest, gradually rose to assert their ethnic and cultural identity. They succeeded not only in preserving the traditions inherited from the Medes and the Persians, but also in spreading and propagating their distinct culture among many neighbouring societies. For some eight centuries Iran continued to be one of the four major civilizing forces active in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages: Greco-Roman (including Byzantine), Iranian, Indian, and Chinese.

Initially it appeared as if the conquest of Alexander and the Greek penetration heralded a decisive change of cultural direction; but in retrospect the Greek impact can be seen to have been ultimately transient. True, the Iranian ruling elite were hellenized for a while, and a symbiosis of Greek and Iranian cultures produced hybrid offsprings, noticeably in the fields of religion and art; but Iran retained enough

[1] See p. 624.

vitality and vigour in the long run to absorb some of the alien cultural elements and to shed others, surfacing once again with a genuine spirit of its own.

The Parthians and then the Sasanians became the torch-bearers and the representatives of a culture which displayed itself in a distinct religion, a recognizable art, and a characteristic form of social organization and government. The dualistic aspect of its religion emphasized the reality of evil; its monotheistic tendency, on the other hand, was well in accord with the evolution of its social organization and the supreme authority of the King of Kings, who needed decisive authority in order to hold together a society of multiracial, multilingual peoples inhabiting a vast area disjoined by high mountain chains and harsh deserts.

Set at the crossroad between the Mediterranean world, China, and India, Iran was an effective intermediary for the communication of goods and ideas. Not only did her culture strongly affect Central Asia, Caucasia, and Mesopotamia, but her impact was felt in countries as far away as China and Rome. When Iran fell to the Arabs, still her cultural heritage proved of immense value for the enrichment of Islamic civilization.

PART I

POLITICAL HISTORY

The political history of Iran from the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. to the fall of the Sasanian empire in A.D. 651 is covered in six chapters. A chapter apiece is devoted to each of the three major dynasties – the Seleucids, the Arsacids and the Sasanians – which occupied a central position and ruled over Iran and Mesopotamia consecutively for the entire extent of the period under review. The other chapters deal with kingdoms and peripheral states which existed parallel to one or other central dynasty. The fortunes of the Iranian elements in Asia Minor – Pontus, Commagene and Cappadocia in particular – are discussed in Chapter 3.

The chapter on the Seleucids does not concern itself with a narrative of events in the Seleucid empire, which does not belong to Iranian history proper. Details of relations and conflicts between the Seleucids and the eastern states will be found in Chapters 2, 5, 8(*a*), 11 and 12.

Complete agreement on the existence of some Parthian kings or their sequence is lacking; therefore discrepancies occasionally occur between different chapters in the numbering of some of the monarchs, especially those named Artabanus and Vologeses. These are pointed out by cross references.

Special attention has been paid to the kingdoms which developed to the east and north of central Iran, both to counter a relative neglect of their history in standard works on Iranian history and to present the latest research in a field which has particularly benefited from recent archaeological and epigraphic discoveries. Thus Chapter 5 encompasses an account of several kingdoms or empires, including the Greco-Bactrian, Indo-Scythian, Kushān and Hephthalite, which developed in eastern Iran and beyond, while Chapter 6 treats of the realms of Transoxiana – more particularly Sogdiana and Chorasmia in the north-east and north. A discussion of the minor houses of Persis, Elymais and Characene, which ruled under the Seleucid and then for a time under the Arsacid suzerainty, has, however, been assigned to the numismatic section, since evidence for their history comes almost entirely from coins. Chapter 7 deals with the Iranian settlements to the east of the Pamirs, particularly in the kingdom of Khotan.

The Iranian presence in Armenia, Georgia and Albania, as well as in some border provinces and city-states on the western marches is treated in the third section of this volume, which deals with the interrelations of Iran and her neighbours.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 30 on Eastern Iran, Transoxiana, Settlements East of the Pamirs and Development of the Arts in Transoxiana respectively, complement each other in many ways, and the reader would benefit by consulting them together. Editor.

CHAPTER I

THE SELEUCID PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

Our knowledge of Seleucid Iran is unfortunately meagre. The scanty sources mostly record occurrences such as military campaigns, royal accessions and the like, and hardly give any information on economic or social matters. Even the isolated facts we speak of are almost all Greek; in Seleucid Iran, as we know it, the Iranians are not seen or heard. The reasons for these deficiencies are historical.

Memory is selective; succeeding generations remember what is relevant to their own life and forget the rest: "Let the dead bury their dead."[1] After the Romans had ended Seleucid rule in Syria in 63 B.C., nobody cared any longer for the defunct dynasty. Sycophants and historians alike now turned to the Caesars. The only extant Greek outline of Seleucid history is appended to the narrative of the Roman conquest of Syria in Appian's "History of Rome", compiled in the 2nd century A.D.

As for the Iranians, they lost the memory of their remote past. Whereas after the Arab conquest the Zoroastrian priests and native gentry endeavoured to keep alive the Persian tradition and to preserve religious writings and the glory of the Sasanians,[2] the pre-Sasanian past receded into the realm of fable, and Alexander himself became "the king of Rūm", that is, of Byzantium. When Bīrūnī collected (*c.* A.D. 1000) "The Vestiges of Past Generations" (*al-Āthār al-bāqiya*), he learned of Cyrus only from Jewish (Christian) sources, where the founder of the Persian monarchy was remembered as a friend of the Chosen People.[3]

Contemporary records of the Seleucid period in Iran had been written on perishable materials (papyrus, leather, wood) and thus did not survive. Only a few Greek inscriptions on stone, mostly from Susa, have been recovered as yet, and the excavation of Seleucid sites, except in Susa, has hardly begun. Thus, the present account can only mark the limits of our ignorance.

[1] Cf. E. J. Bickerman, "La Chaîne de la tradition pharisienne", *Revue Biblique* LIX (Paris 1952), pp. 44ff.

[2] Cf. Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, p. 37; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 440.

[3] Cf. E. Yarshater, "List of Achaemenid Kings in Biruni and Bar Hebraeus", in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Biruni Symposium* (Columbia University, New York, 1976), pp. 49–65.

POLITICAL HISTORY

After Alexander's death in 323 B.C., his generals divided the empire and for more than thirty years fought one another for a larger portion of Alexander's heritage. One of these warlords was Seleucus, who on Alexander's order had married Apame, daughter of the Sogdian satrap Spitamenes, in 324 B.C. The Seleucid dynasty sprang from this Macedonian–Iranian union. In 312, Seleucus succeeded in establishing his dominion in Babylon. Very shortly, he extended it to Media, Susiana, "and the neighbouring countries".[1] His enemy Antigonus ruled over Asia Minor, but was unable to dislodge Seleucus who in 306 or 305 took the royal title for himself. By 303, Seleucus had reconstituted Alexander's empire from the Euphrates to the Indian Ocean, except for the lands along the Indus which he had to cede to Sandracottas (Chandragupta), the founder of the Maurya dynasty in Northern India. Seleucus' capital was established at Seleucia on the Tigris (in the vicinity of Babylon), founded by him about 305.[2] In 301, Seleucus and his ally Lysimachus of Thracia defeated Antigonus and Seleucus obtained North Syria as his prize.

At this juncture, Seleucus made a decision which changed the course of Iranian history. The Persian kings from Susa and Ecbatana (Hamadān) reigned over the realm which bordered both the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. In Seleucia, Seleucus was still on the fringe of Iran. But in 300 B.C. he transferred his headquarters to the newly founded Antioch on the lower Orontes, in North Syria. His new capital was eccentric to the land mass over which he ruled – "from India to the Syrian coast".[3] Now, over 1,700 miles (as the crow flies) separated him from his posts on the Jaxartes (Syr Darya). But he, and his dynasty, had no choice.

They knew that they, as Alexander before them, did not win by force of numbers, "but by skill and intelligence".[4] They would be unable to govern and exploit their immense domain without a steady intake of men and ideas from Greece. The tract on which Seleucus I built his Syrian capital had been neglected by Phoenician mariners since it offered no safe anchorage. Seleucus' Greek engineers created two artificial harbours (Seleucia and Laodicea) to serve the new

[1] Diodorus XIX. 92. 5.
[2] N. M. Waggoner, "The early Alexander coinage of Seleucia on the Tigris", *ANSMN* XV (1969), p. 30.
[3] Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 32. 4.
[4] Diodorus XIX. 90. 3.

capital.[1] The life line of the Seleucid power was tied to the short coastal strip between the Gulf of Alexandretta and Beirut.

The choice of Antioch as capital necessarily weakened the royal authority in far-distant Iran, just as the command of the Achaemenians was wanting in strength on the Mediterranean coast. Yet it was not the Iranians, but the Macedonian generals in Iran who took advantage of their absent master for contriving separatist movements. The first defection occurred on the sensitive north-eastern frontier, between the Caspian Sea and the Hindu Kush. Here, in the Seleucid province of Bactria, in northern Khurāsān and the lands north of the Jaxartes (Syr Darya), Macedonian troops and Iranian chieftains were united by the necessity to hang together or be hanged separately. The invasion of the hungry nomads who roamed over "a vast plain stretching out interminably"[2] in Central Asia would have destroyed the Greek colonies and dispossessed the khans and their tribes. From the Saljuqs (*c.* A.D. 1000) to the Qājārs (1794–1925), almost all the shāhs of Persia, with perhaps the exception of the Ṣafavids, were intruders from Turkestan or their descendants.

About 280 B.C., the nomads from the north succeeded in penetrating the Seleucid territory as far as Tirmidh and Herāt. They were expelled by Antiochus I, son and successor to Seleucus I, who also restored the ravaged cities. For instance, he rebuilt the citadel of Marv and raised a rampart of beaten earth and brick (up to 20 metres high and about 270 km. long) which surrounded the Marv oasis.[3]

But the wars in the west, particularly with Egypt (280–72 and 260–53), fought over the defence or the expansion of the sea-front of the empire, strained the resources of the west and made the court of Antioch demand more and more help from the provinces of the east. In 273, for instance, the satrap of Bactria had to send 20 elephants for the war against Egypt and thus weakened the defence of his satrapy against the nomadic hordes. Following the death of Antiochus II in 246, a dynastic war broke out in the west between Laodice, the divorced wife of Antiochus II, and Berenice, his widow, who was supported by her brother, Ptolemy III of Egypt. The army in Bactria, led by its

[1] H. Seyrig, "Antiquités Syriennes 92", *Syria* XLVII (1970), p. 305.

[2] Herodotus I. 204.

[3] Strabo XI. 10. 2 (C516); cf. S. A. Viyazigin, "Stena Antiokha Sotera vokrug drevnei Marigiany", *Trudy Južno-Turkmenistanskoj archeologičeskoj komplesknoj ekspedicii* I (Ashkabad, 1949), pp. 260–75; M. E. Masson, *ibid.* XII (Ashkabad, 1963), pp. 9, 14; B. A. Litvinski, "Drevni sredneasiatski gorod", in *Drevni Vostok Goroda i Torogovlya* (Erevan, 1973), p. 113.

general Diodotus, forsook the House of Seleucus, which was now divided against itself; they thought that they could do without further help from the court at Antioch.[1] This reasoning proved right. The Greek kings of Bactria, whose riches amazed contemporary observers, defended their territory against the nomads for about 130 years, and "subdued more peoples than Alexander", particularly in India.[2] When Andragoras, the Seleucid satrap of Parthia (roughly western Khurāsān), also revolted, and his province was overrun by the nomadic tribe of Parni led by Arsaces, the Greek kings of Bactria and the Seleucid court, in unspoken or agreed collaboration, succeeded in blocking the expansion of the Arsacids. For some eighty years the Arsacids of Parthia remained local dynasts who were continually embroiled in wars with their neighbours.[3]

The court of Antioch repeatedly tried to regain the lost Far East. Again and again new conflicts or dynastic struggles in the west compelled the Seleucid kings to break off successful oriental campaigns and go back to Syria. Antiochus III alone succeeded in re-establishing his authority, albeit nominally, over Bactria and the Far East (209–5). He won the title of the "Great King",[4] and the eastern booty allowed him to defeat Egypt and to acquire Palestine and Phoenicia in 200 B.C. But soon he became involved in a war with Rome, lost it in 189, and had to surrender western Asia Minor. All that he had recovered in the east was soon lost again. Yet, western Iran, from Ecbatana to the Persian Gulf, remained loyal, though in 223, and again in 162, the Macedonian generals in Media grasped at the royal diadem. New dynastic struggles in Syria, however, delivered Media, some time after 148 B.C., and Babylonia, in 141 B.C., to the Parthians.[5] Nevertheless, Greek cities, as well as the Iranians in Media and Persia, sided with the Seleucids. Demetrius II set out to Media in answer to an appeal from Greek colonists in hope that if he were successful in the east he would be able to drive out his rival, Tryphon, from Syria. He found much support, but was captured by the Parthians in 139.[6] His brother Antiochus VII succeeded in recovering Babylonia and Media, but fell

[1] Apollodorus of Artemita in Strabo XI. 11. 1 (C516); XV. 1. 3 (C686); on chronology, cf. A. R. Bellinger, "The coins from the treasure of the Oxus", *ANSMN* x (1962), p. 62.

[2] Apollodorus of Artemita in Strabo XI. 11. 1 (C516).

[3] Strabo XI. 8. 3 (C511). On Andragoras, cf. L. Robert, "Inscription hellénistique de l'Iran", *Hellenica* XI–XII (1960), pp. 85–91; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 30.

[4] L. Robert, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes* (Paris, 1964), p. 19.

[5] L. Robert, *Gnomon* XXXV (1963), p. 76. Cf. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria*, pp. 110–14.

[6] Cf. O. Mørkholm, "A Greek Coin Hoard from Susiana", *Acta Archaeologica* XXXVI (Copenhagen, 1965), p. 136.

in a skirmish in 129 B.C. Thus Seleucid rule over Iran was ended once and for all.

Iran was lost to the Seleucids not at the Syr Darya, but in Antioch, by the Court which always took the loyalty of "Oriental Barbary" for granted and wasted the resources of the empire in futile wars and dynastic squabbles.[1] Nevertheless, the Seleucid dominion over Iran lasted for 183 years (312–129 B.C.). How could a line of alien condottieri at Antioch, separated by distance, race, language, religion and mode of life, last so long in the land of the Achaemenians and the Sasanians? To answer this question, we must consider the political organization and the internal structure of Seleucid Iran.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Achaemenians proclaimed that they were Persians, and received the realm from the supreme god Ahuramazda. Later the Sasanian clergy taught that the kingdom and the (true) religion were twins.[2] The Seleucids were of Macedonian stock, but they neither ruled over Macedonia nor had any authority over Macedonians abroad,[3] and they commanded peoples not "by the grace of God", but by the right of the spear. They were neither native rulers, nor the instruments of a "colonial" power, but just lucky condottieri. Their power was not institutional but personal. In the battle against Molon, a rebellious general, the latter's troops went over to Antiochus III as soon as they saw their legitimate sovereign, but the other wing of Molon, not seeing the king in person, fought stubbornly against the king's regiments. In fact, the Seleucid Ship of State was not anchored in the heavens, but moored to the mutual "good will' (*eunoia*) between the ruler and the ruled.[4] Antiochus I recovered the dominion of Seleucus I, his father, "by his valour as well as by the good will of his 'friends' and his troops". In turn, the ruler had to "win over" his subjects by his own eunoia. It was not a constitutional arrangement, but a political necessity. The diademed condottiere was isolated; he could not even rely on his tribe (as for instance, the Saljuqs did), since he had none. His "friends", that is, his court, from which he had to choose his

[1] Justin XII. 3. 3.

[2] Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, p. 33; "The Testament of Ardashir" in S. Shaked, "Esoteric trends in Zoroastrianism", *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* III (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 214–19.

[3] Musti, "Lo Stato dei Seleucidi", p. 87.

[4] Inscription of Ilion in Rostovtzeff I, p. 431; cf. e.g. Polybius V. 46. 8; 50. 7; VIII. 23. 5.

generals and ministers, were an international lot, mostly men as uprooted as their master and who were attached to him personally by his bounties and their fellow-feeling. An Acarnian, a former "friend" of the king of Macedonia, passed to "the more opulent court of Antiochus [III]", and became his adviser.[1]

The king's army, his administration, his colonies and the Greek cities in Iran were no less international; Macedonians, Thessalians, other Greeks and various non-native elements were partners in exploiting the Orient and were as isolated in the immense alien country as the king himself. They all had to sink or to swim together. This was the real meaning of the mutual "good will" of which we have just spoken.

The administrative organization of the realm was simple in principle, but complex in practice. Alexander and the Seleucids preserved the Persian division of the empire into enormous satrapies. The Iranian satrapies were placed under a viceroy, "one [who is] over the upper satrapies", who resided in Ecbatana. The satrap was above all the general commanding the troops in his province. The satrapy was divided into districts, called "places" (*topoi*). But such a district could be a Greek city, a military ward (*phylake*), or a group of native villages.[2]

A network of Greek military settlements and cities covered Iran from the Syr Darya to the Persian Gulf, and kept the realm together.[3] A colony was generally established on the royal land, and on an easily defendable site. For instance, at Ai Khanum, on the Amu Darya (Oxus), the colony was protected on two sides by rivers, and on the third side by a hill which became its citadel.[4] Colonists received land lots which were encumbered with the obligation of military service. A Greek city (*polis*) was formally autonomous, though in fact controlled by the royal overseer (*epistates*); it had its own territory which made it more or less self-sufficient economically. Thus, the classical traditions of the Greek polis continued in the Orient: the landowners lived in the city

[1] Livy xxxv. 18. 1.

[2] L. Robert, "Inscription honorifique à Laodicée d'Iran (Nehavend)", *Hellenica* VIII (1950), p. 73; *Id.* "Encore une inscription Grecque de l'Iran", *CRAI* 1967, p. 281. The Seleucids seem to have abandoned the Persian system of sub-satrapies, on which cf. W. B. Henning, "Ein persischer Titel im Altaramaeischen" in M. Black and G. Fohrer (eds), *In memoriam Paul Kahle* (Berlin, 1968), p. 144 (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alten-testamentliche Wissenschaft, CIII).

[3] [On the administration of the Greek cities in Iran see also pp. 713ff. and pp. 822ff.]

[4] D. Schlumberger and P. Bernard, "Aï Khanoum", *Bulletin de correspondence hellénique* LXXXIX (Athens-Paris, 1965), pp. 590–602; P. Bernard, "Ai Khanum on the Oxus", *Proceedings of British Academy* LIII (1967), pp. 71–95.

and not in the open country, though, of course, they could have luxurious manor houses, furnished with baths, outside the city walls.[1] The walls made the city impregnable, except for a regular army, and the city militia could be relied upon to keep in check the unruly natives on her territory.[2] Thus, Media was ringed with Greek settlements as defence against the neighbouring peoples.[3] It is noteworthy, though inexplicable, that none of the Greek cities in Iran received the privilege of (copper) coinage which was conceded by the kings to several cities in Syria, and also to Nisibis and Edessa in Upper Mesopotamia.

The internal organization of the Greek city in Iran remains obscure. We hear of traditional magistrates (*archonts*) and such, but we do not know whether, for instance, there was a native quarter, or whether artisans of the same craft worked on the same street, as, it seems, was the case in some Greek cities under Parthian rule.[4] But how was town life in Iranian Iran?[5] Were Iranian towns essentially administrative centres with a citadel for the governor and his guard? Can we distinguish between a "town" and a walled "village"?[6] What was the function of the latter? How widespread was the type of a big house inhabited by a large patriarchal family? The Sasanian legal texts still speak of the large agnatic groups with a common ancestral worship

[1] Bernard, "Fouilles de Ai Khanoum", *CRAI* 1974, pp. 280–5.

[2] [On the organization of Seleucid cities in Iran, see also pages 821–6].

[3] Polybius x. 27. 3.

[4] M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its art* (Oxford, 1938), p. 47; G. Pugachenkova, *Iskustvo Turkmenistana* (Moscow, 1967), p. 30; L. Waterman, *Second Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tell Umar, Iraq* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1933), p. 6. In fact the excavations only reveal stalls on the street side of houses; whether these shops formed a *sūq*, as Rostovtzeff says, we cannot know. Cf. also L. Robert, "Épigraphie greque," *Annuaire*: *École pratique des Hautes Études, IVe section* 1968/1969, p. 168, and B. A. Litvinski and Ch. Muchitdinov, "Antichnoe gorodische Saksanochur", *Sovetskaya Archeologiya* 1969. 2, pp. 161–6.

[5] Cf. B. A. Litvinski, "Drevni sredneasiatski gorod" in *Drevni Vostok Goroda i Torgovlya* (Erevan, 1973), pp. 99–125 and I. V. Pyankov, on the central Asian cities of the Achaemenian period according to Greek and Latin authors, in *ibid.*, pp. 125–35.

[6] Strabo xi. 11. 3 (C517). Soviet excavations in Central Asia revealed the existence of large settlements, generally unwalled, around a citadel; V. M. Masson, "I monumenti archeologici dell'Asia centrale" in *Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, pp. 358–81. For Iran proper cf. U. Scerrato, "L'edificio sacro di Dahan-i Ghulaman (Sistan)", *ibid.*, pp. 457–70 and *Id.* "Excavations at Dahan-i Ghulaman", *East and West* xvi (Rome, 1966), pp. 9–30. Polybius x. 31. 5 mentions an "unwalled city", named Tambarka in Media, that had a "palace" (*basileion*), that is, probably, a fortified residence of the governor. Cf. B. A. Litvinski and Ch. Muchitdinov, "Antichnoe gorodische Saksanochur", pp. 160–78. A. Z. Rosenfeld, "Qal'a (Kala)-tip ukreplennavo poseleniya" *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* 1951. 1, pp. 22–38; A. B. Gudkova, *Top-Kala* (Tashkent, 1964); V. M. Masson (ed.), *Drevnyaya Baktriya* (Leningrad, 1974), pp. 3–13. On the streets of artisans at Marv see G. A. Pugachenkova, *Puti razvitiya arkhitektury Turkmenii* (Ashkabad, 1958), p. 41.

and a certain legal and economic unity.[1] What happened to the tribal system under the Seleucids? To mention another problem: from Crassus' defeat at Carrhae until Julian the Apostate, at least, Persian arrows checked the advance of Roman legions. The bowmen were clients of great landlords who, on occasion, became more or less independent rulers.[2] What was the situation and the power of these Iranian lords under Seleucid rule? Did they live in their castles or did they go to the towns? We can only hope that new discoveries may illuminate these forgotten pages of the Iranian past.

In the last resort, the power of the Seleucids rested on force, that is on the army; the king first and last was a victorious captain. Of fourteen Seleucids who reigned between 312 and 129 B.C. only two died in bed. Two infant kings were murdered. Ten kings died on campaign. The backbone of the army was the phalanx of heavy infantry recruited among the Macedonian colonists and supported by heavy cavalry. The Seleucids could throw as many as 72,000 men into battle. Only a small part of them came from Iran: *c.* 12,000 out of 68,000 at Raphia in 217 B.C. The Iranians served as light infantry, and mostly came from the "wild" tribes, such as the Cissii who held travellers to ransom on the way from Susa to Ecbatana.

Why did the Seleucids neglect men from Persia proper (Fārs), reputed to be the best soldiers in Iran,[3] and the splendid Iranian horse which was the mainstay of the Greek kings of Bactria? An explanation may perhaps be found in the following. Alexander began to drill an army of Iranians – and modern scholars praise him for this expression of universal brotherhood; and because he was king of Macedonia, he would have been able to keep his soldiers in check. But the Seleucids had no nation behind them; an Iranian army, necessarily recruited and commanded by native chieftains, would have delivered the fate of the dynasty to the caprice and interest of native potentates. History confirmed the judgement of the Seleucids. The army of the Arsacids, their Parthian successors in Iran, essentially consisted of a retinue of great lords who naturally became royal governors and masters of their respective fiefs. To mobilize his host, the Parthian king had to appeal to his satraps.

[1] R. Ghirshman, *Village perso-achéménide* (Paris, 1954), p. 6 (Mémoires de la Mission archéologique en Iran XXXVI); B. N. Pilipko in V. M. Masson (ed.), *Karakumskie Drevnosti* II (Ashkabad, 1968), pp. 36–9. On the agnatic family, see A. G. Perikhanian, "Agnatic groups in ancient Iran", *VDI* 1968. 3, pp. 28–53; cf. G. A. Paguchenkova, "Bactrian house", in *Istoriya i kultura naradov srednei Asii* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 38–42; and below pp. 641 ff.
[2] Julian, *Caesars*, 324 d.
[3] Diodorus XIX. 21. 3; cf. Boyce, p. 27.

The financial organization of Seleucid Iran remains almost unknown. We know the titles of some tax officials, but do not know anything about the actual taxation. Seleucid coins show, however, that the monetary system was uniform throughout the Empire. Only the royal coin was legal tender; foreign silver circulated as bullion. The essential unit was the silver piece of four drachms, that is about 17 grams weight. There were several mints in Iran, and each of them had a considerable autonomy in the choice of types and legends of coins.

As the Seleucid standard was identical with the Attic standard which was followed in the greater part of the Hellenistic world, the trade from the Indian Ocean to the Adriatic Sea was based on the same monetary system. On the other hand, the Ptolemies of Egypt used a different standard (a four drachm piece of *c.* 14.4 grams), and this meant the economic division of the Hellenistic world into two monetary blocks.

The unified silver coinage (which had been lacking in the Achaemenid Empire), was a boon to traders. The Seleucids generally encouraged agriculture and commerce, two abundant sources of revenue. For instance, they, as the Achaemenians before them, granted hereditary possession of empty land to the farmer who planted trees on it.[1] They improved roads and harbours; a crossing on the Āmū Daryā near Tirmidh continued to be used for centuries after the end of the Greek domination in Iran.[2] By canalizing the river Eulaios (Kārūn), they established a fluvial route between Susa and the Persian Gulf. The victory of Antiochus III in the Far East (pp. 6, 187–8) re-opened the bazaars of India to Seleucid merchants, and he undertook a military expedition against the Gerrhaens of the Arabian coast in order to divert the spice trade to Seleucia on the Tigris and to Susa.[3]

Coin hoards give some indication of the pattern of commerce.[4] It seems that Iran formed a comparatively closed and somewhat

[1] J. & L. Robert, "Bulletin épigraphique, no. 651", *Revue des études grecques* LXXX (1967), pp. 556–8; cf. Polybius x. 27. 3.

[2] V. Minorsky, "A Greek Crossing on the Oxus", *BSOAS* XXX (1967), p. 45; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 267; cf. Rostovtzeff II, p. 1433.

[3] Rostovtzeff I, p. 458; Le Rider, *Suse*, pp. 267ff. Seleucid coins were imitated in Southern Arabia; A. A. Houghton and G. Le Rider, "Un trésor des monnaies hellénistiques trouvé près de Suse", *RN* VI^e s. VIII (1966), p. 121.

[4] On circulation of coins in Iran, besides Le Rider, cf. H. J. Troxell and W. F. Spengler, "A hoard of early Greek coins from Afghanistan", *ANSMN* XV (1969), pp. 1–19; H. Seyrig, "Monnaies grecques des fouilles de Doura et d'Antioche", *RN* VI^e s. I (1958), p. 179; E. Schoenert, "Die wirtschaftliche Auswertung seleukidischer und ptolemaeischen Münzfunde (306–197 v.u.Z.)" in E. C. Welskopf (ed.), *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der alten Welt* I (Berlin, 1964), pp. 355–61 (Deutsche Historiker-Gesellschaft). Mørkholm, "A Greek coin hoard from Susiana", p. 146.

backward economic region. Silver struck in Iran circulated freely within Iran. This is true even of the coins of the Greek kings of Bactria. But the Iranian pieces, particularly after Antiochus III, are rarely found in the west, while coins struck in Antioch, and from *c.* 180 B.C. onwards in Seleucia on the Tigris, dominated the market in Susa. It seems that merchandise travelled in stages. Spices of Arabia and India came to Susa, and, on the other hand, western merchandise was carried to Susa or Ecbatana by traders from Antioch or Seleucia on the Tigris. It is noteworthy that silver of Tyre which is abundant in Upper Mesopotamia (Dura-Europos) does not appear in Susa, as if the merchants of Syria divided the Iranian markets between themselves. It is also noteworthy that Seleucid coins apparently did not circulate in Central Asia. On the other hand, the importance of Indian trade is illustrated by the fact that until *c.* 280 B.C. the mint of Bactria issued coins on the "Indian" standard, that is tetradrachm of *c.* 12 gr.

THE GREEK IRAN AND THE IRANIAN IRAN

Greek settlers in Iran wanted to remain Greeks. Alexander's colonists demanded "A Greek education and a Greek way of life" in Iran and after Alexander's death some of them began to return home, since they felt deprived of Greek civilization.[1] Thus, a school, a sports centre (*gymnasion*) and a theatre were built on the Oxus and Greek athletic games were held on Baḥrain island in the Persian Gulf.[2] The Delphic maxims were inscribed on the walls of the funerary monuments of the Thessalian founder of a Greek settlement on the present Afghan–Soviet frontier.[3] Yet, the Greek settlements and cities were only islands in the Iranian sea, where the Greek language was hardly known and Greek mores were alien and probably distasteful. In fact, two worlds, the Greek and Iranian, co-existed in Seleucid Iran.

Of course, the Greeks exploited the land; in a small Greek city on the Oxus there were buildings of a size unheard of in Greece, except for temples. For instance a court of about 137 metres by 108 metres was framed by 116 columns.[4] But for the tax-payer it was unimportant whether his money was spent on a Seleucid or on an Achaemenian colonnade. What counted was that the money was spent in Iran and

[1] Diodorus XVIII. 7. 1.
[2] P. Bernard, "Fouilles de Ai Khanum", *CRAI* 1976, p. 318.
[3] L. Robert, "Inscriptions grecques nouvelles de la Bactriane", *CRAI* 1968, pp. 416–57.
[4] Bernard, *Aï Khanoum*, p. 117.

not in some distant mother country of the conquerors. In this way the greater part of the exacted sum returned to the Iranians in the form of salaries, payments for materials, etc. On the other hand the kings did not try to hellenize their Iranian subjects. The Seleucids lacked the Christian zeal of converting the infidels to the sole true faith or to decent plumbing. The Seleucid kings left people as they had been before the Macedonian conquest; busy with wars and other pressing matters, they had no time and no means, even if they had had the inclination, to meddle in the daily life of their subjects in remote Iran. A royal order issued in western Asia Minor took some fifty days to reach the authorities in Media.[1] Edmund Burke said that distance must weaken authority; 'the Seleucids learned by experience that this was the "immutable condition" of their extensive and far-flung empire'.

The countryside of Selucid Iran was left to the Iranians. The village was a fiscal and economic unit, but its life remains virtually unknown. A Greek observer in 210 B.C. notes the importance of underground irrigation canals (*qanāts*).[2] We do not know whether the Seleucids ever thought of spreading the use of this ingenious device, or otherwise tried to improve the agricultural technology as the Lagids did in Egypt.[3] The chieftains of tribes and the khans continued to rule over their men and villages and exploited the peasant as they did before and after the Seleucids. The potentates at Stakhr, near Persepolis, could strike their own silver coins with legends in Aramaic and the fire altar on the reverse.[4] Country people spoke in their Iranian dialects, or even in Elamite, and the scribes, as under the Achaemenians, recorded transactions in Aramaic. As long as peace reigned, so that the roads were reasonably secure, and the taxes were collected, the Seleucids did not intervene in local matters. The tax collector was probably the main

[1] L. Robert, "Encore une inscription grecque de l'Iran", *CRAI* 1967, p. 290; cf. Strabo XI. 7. 2 (C509).

[2] Polybius X. 28. 2; cf. F. W. Wallbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* II (Oxford, 1968), *ad loc.*; O. Bucci, "Note di politica agraria Achemenide: A proposito del passo X. 28. 3 in Polibio", in *Studi in Memoria di Guido Donzati* (Milan, 1973), pp. 181–90.

[3] See the studies of P. Briant, "Contrainte militaire, dépendance rurale et exploitation des territoires en Asie achémenide", *Index* VIII (Univ. of Camerioni, 1978–79), pp. 48–98; "Colonisation hellénistique et populations indigènes", Klio LX (1978), pp. 57–95; "Brigandage, dissidence et conquête en asie achémenide et hellénistique", *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* II: *Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon* CLXXXVIII (Paris, 1976), pp. 163–258; "Villages et communautés villageoises d'Asie achémenide et hellénistique", *JESHO* XVIII (1975), pp. 175–88.

[4] Strabo XV. 3. 24 (C736); P. Naster, "Note d'épigraphie monétaire de Perside", *IA* VIII (1968), pp. 74–80; D. Stronach, "The Kūh-i-Shahrak Fire Altar", *JNES* XXV (1966), pp. 217–27; K. Schippmann, *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 227–33.

link between the Greek and the Iranian Iran. This "salutary neglect", to quote Burke again, eliminated the most serious and the most frequent cause of friction between an alien ruler and an indigenous population. Keeping aloof, the Iranians did not need to resent the invaders. They were able to ignore them, and as an ancient historian notes, passively accepted the succession of their Macedonian overlords.[1]

The Greek and the Iranian Iran also more or less ignored one another in cultural matters. Being polytheists, the Greeks respected the local gods; Nanaia continued to be worshipped in Susa-Seleucia, just as an Iranian from Bactria coming to Delos made offerings to Apollo.[2] It is true that in times of financial stress the Seleucids sometimes plundered Oriental temples, but it was Mithridates I of Parthia who sacked the main sanctuaries of the Elymais.[3] As to private cults, nobody was impeded if he wanted to worship some exotic deity, be it Sarapis from Alexandria or the Cappadocian goddess Ma.[4] The Greeks still clung to their ancestral gods; they worshipped them even in Persepolis.[5] Greek colonists from Magnesia on the Meander in western Asia Minor brought their (originally Thessalian) gods to Antioch on the Persian Gulf (now Bushire).[6] Likewise, Greek colonists gave Greek names to Iranian rivers and mountains. The Oriental settlers generally erected a new structure on the ruins of the old building; Greek settlements were built anew. Even on a small island off the Arabian coast (Ikaros, now Failaka), first a military post, then a tiny Greek colony was planted by the Seleucids.[7]

The Iranians did not succumb to the charm of Greek gods. Syncretism was no more than verbal. Herakles was popular among the Greeks, and the Iranians began to represent their hero Verethraghna with Herakles' attributes, just as the Buddhists borrowed the type of Apollo for images of the Buddha.[8]

[1] Justin XLI. 4. 5; cf. Strabo XI. 9. 2 (C515).

[2] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 292; Rostovtzeff III, p. 1492.

[3] Strabo XVI. 1. 18 (C744).

[4] Robert, "Inscription hellénistique de l'Iran", p. 85; Le Rider, *loc. cit.*

[5] Robert, "Encore une inscription grecque de l'Iran", p. 282.

[6] L. Robert, "Inscriptions séleucides de Phrygie et d'Iran", *Hellenica* VII (1949), p. 19; L. Robert, "Les inscriptions" in J. des Gagniers (et al.), *Fouilles, Laodicée du Lycos: Le Nymphée Campaignes 1961–1963* (Quebec–Paris, 1969), p. 330 (Université Laval Recherches archéologiques, Série 1). Cf. also e.g. M. N. Tod, "A Greek inscription from the Persian Gulf", *JHS* LXIII (1943), p. 112; Lukonin, *Persia II*, pls. 22, 23 (statuettes from Laodicea/Nihāvand).

[7] On the "inhabitants of Ikarion", cf. K. Jeppesen, "Et kongebud til Ikaros", *Kuml* 1960, pp. 153–93.

[8] Cf. A. D. H. Bivar and S. Shaked, "The Inscriptions at Shīmbār", *BSOAS* XXVII (1964), pl. II; R. Ghirshman, "Bard-è Nechandeh, Centre réligieux iranien", *AArchASH*

Similarly, the two law systems remained separate. The Greeks of Susa published their acts of manumission on the walls of the temple of Nanaia, but these documents were written in Greek and according to Greek legal ideas. Law went with the language of the deed. Under the Parthian kings in Kurdistan, a transaction between two Iranian parties, written in Greek in 44–5 A.D. follows the Greek law. A transaction of 53–4 A.D., concerning the same vineyard, but recorded in Parthian Aramaic, is formulated according to a law system which is not Greek.[1] We may guess that under the Seleucids, the countryside of Iran continued to live according to its own traditional and customary law, including the administration of justice, in civil litigations at least.

Greek art was much appreciated by the Iranian aristocracy, which even accepted male nudity in sculpture,[2] but the potters of Hellenistic Marv did not follow Greek models.[3] A vogue of Greek eroticism led to fabrication of terracotta figurines of naked women, but the mode disappeared in the Parthian age. On the other hand, the image of the Great Mother of the gods on a silver plaque from a Greek colony on the Oxus, though "orientalized", owes nothing to the Iranian tradition. Yet, Greek and native craftsmen often worked together on the same project and often exchanged technological experience and artistic motifs. For instance, antefixes of Oriental style are used on the monument of Kineas, the founder of a Greek city on the Oxus,[4] and the disposition of Persian palaces reappears in buildings of the same city.[5]

How, then, may we explain the "hellenization" of the East? As a matter of fact, the modern idea of hellenization is anachronistic. It has two sources: first, pro-Macedonian propaganda in Greece before Alexander assured the listeners that the "barbarians" would be only

XIX (1967), pp. 3–14; G. A. Pugachenkova, "O kultach Baktrii v svete archeologii", *VDI* 1974. 3, pp. 124–35; *Id.* "Kult Gerakla v Baktrii", *VDI* 1977. 2, pp. 112–20.

1 H. S. Nyberg, "The Pahlavi documents from Avroman", *Le Monde Oriental* XVII (Paris, 1923), pp. 182–230; a new (Russian) translation of the text by Perikhanian, "Agnatic groups", p. 46.

2 G. A. Pugachenkova, *Skulptura Khalchayana* (Tashkent, 1966), pp. 147, 150, 226; R. D. Barnett, "The art of Bactria and the treasure of the Oxus', *IA* VIII (1968), p. 50.

3 G. A. Koshelenko, *Kultura Partfii* (Moscow, 1966), p. 72; on the other hand, the pottery of Samarqand is said to reveal Hellenistic influence; see S. K. Kabanov, "À l'étude de la stratigraphie de l'oppidum medieval Afrasiyab", *Sovetskaya Arkeologiya* I (Moscow, 1969), pp. 189–91.

4 Cf. Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* (no. 44a), pp. 218–21; Koshelenko, *op. cit.*, p. 90; P. Bernard, "Campagne de fouilles à Ai Khanoum 1969", *CRAI* 1970, pp. 339–47; *Id.* "Sièges et lits en ivoire", *Syria* XLVII (1970), p. 328; *Id.*, *Fouille d'Aï Khanoum I*, pp. 93, 118; cf. D. Schlumberger, *L'Orient Hellénisé* (Paris, 1970), pp. 21–32.

5 Bernard, *Aï Khanoum*, p. 118; *Id.*, "Fouilles de Ai Khanoum" (*CRAI* 1974), p. 286.

too happy to exchange their Oriental despotism for Greek management,[1] and the experience of modern colonization. But as we have already observed the empire of the Seleucids was no "colonial" power.

In fact, the contrast between the "Greek" man and the "Oriental" man belongs to professorial mythology. The Greek influence was only one of several spiritual forces acting simultaneously on the Iranians. Under the Achaemenians, the Persians were certainly influenced by Greek art, yet the Achaemenian tower temples go back to the Urartian prototypes.[2] We know nothing about the influence of Babylonian civilization on the Iranians in the Greek period. Yet there certainly were cultural contacts; the sacrificial rules of Uruk, once carried to Elam, were discovered under the Seleucids in Susa or near Susa, and copied for the temple of Uruk.[3]

How complex the interplay of influences was can be illustrated by the history of alphabets. From the Achaemenian period on, Aramaic was the language of Persian scribes. As late as the 4th century A.D. they remained learned in both Aramaic and Persian.[4] When the Seleucids ruled Iran, the Indian king Aśoka published the Buddhist message both in Greek and Aramaic and engraved it on stones near Qandahār.[5] The Aramaic script was borrowed for numerous Iranian dialects from Persian to Khwārazmian.[6] Yet, in Bactria not only the Bactrians themselves but also the later invaders of the country, the Tukhārians and the Kushāns, used the Greek alphabet for their languages. Again, the legends of Parthian coins until the middle of the 1st century A.D. were only in Greek.

Further, we must remember the Persian diaspora in Greek Asia Minor and in such half-Greek countries as Cappadocia. Names like Arsaces son of Artemidoros, the liturgy in Persian, and the Greek dedication (in eastern Caria) to the gods "of the Persians and of the Hellenes" suggest both hellenization and the adherence to the faith of

[1] Isocrates V. 154.

[2] D. Stronach, "Urartian and Achaemenian tower temples", *JNES* XXVI (1967), pp. 278–88.

[3] J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, N.J., 1950), p. 345.

[4] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses*, 66. 13; cf. M. Sznycer, "Les inscriptions araméennes de Tang-i Butan", *JA* 1965, pp. 1–9.

[5] J. & L. Robert, "Bulletin épigraphique no. 421", *Revue des études grecques* LXXIII (Paris, 1960), pp. 204–5; "Bull. épig. no. 295", *ibid.* LXVII (1963), pp. 185–6; "Bull. épig. no. 442", *ibid.* LXVIII (1965), pp. 179–80.

[6] V. A. Livshitz, The Khwarezmian calendar and the eras in ancient Chorasmia", *AAntASH* XVI (1968), pp. 413–46.

the fathers.[1] This Persian diaspora transmitted to the Greeks the Zoroastrian tradition (and the legends about Zoroaster) and the religion of the Magi. We can imagine that the same diaspora also transmitted Greek manners to Iran.[2]

Unlike Oriental civilizations, Greek civilization was neither sacerdotal nor tribal. The Greeks were no racists, and everybody was free to choose the Greek way of life. When Alexander founded his military colonies on the Syr Darya, he enrolled Iranians among the settlers. Antiochus I transferred Babylonians to "the royal city" of Seleucia on the Tigris. Some noble families from Stakhr were settled by Seleucus I in Karka (Upper Mesopotamia).[3] Further, the Greek polis invented naturalization. An alien could not be made Persian, but a Persian could become a citizen of a Greek polis. Naturalized, he would have to pay homage to the gods of the city, but he was not expected to abandon his ancestral gods. The conversion required was to the Greek language and the Greek way of life. As Plutarch tells us, children of the "barbarians" in Gedrosia (Balūchistān) learned to read Homer. (Some verses of Euripides were engraved in the Seleucid period on a rock near Armavir, in Armenia.)[4] They and their fathers had also to exercise naked in the gymnasion, an abomination to the Orientals (and to the Romans). A man who went through this initiation rite either was or became alienated to his native environment. He became Greek not only in his language but in his soul.

Thus, Greek society was an open and changing society. There was no hereditary nobility of big landowners as in Iranian Iran. The Seleucids, did not have dynasties of viziers, like the Barmakids of Baghdad. This open society was governed by the spirit of adventure and greed. It believed that all that is held in honour and admiration among men is achieved by toil and venture, experience and intelligence.[5] This society of adventure was open to the Iranians if they were ready to become Greek; they could become citizens of a Greek polis in Iran,

[1] [On the spread of Magian traditions and ideas see pp. 100ff. and 826ff.]

[2] L. Robert, *La Carie II* (Paris, 1954), p. 79; *Id.* in *Laodicée du Lycos*, pp. 300, 308, 333.

[3] V. A. Tcherikover, *Die hellenistischen Städtgründungen von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf die Römerzeit* (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 190ff. (Philologus, Supplementband XIX. 1); W. W. Tarn and G. T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 3rd ed. (London, 1952), pp. 159ff.; N. V. Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana* (Moscow, 1956), p. 43.

[4] Plutarch, *de fort. Alex.* 3; J. & L. Robert, "Bulletin épigraphique no. 176", *Revue des études grecques* LXV (Paris, 1952), pp. 181–5; G. P. Carratelli, "Greek Inscriptions of the Middle East", *East and West* XVI (1966), p. 34.

[5] Diodorus XIX. 90. 3; cf. E. J. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York, 1967), pp. 158ff.

or even generals in the Seleucid army. Herodotus observes that of all men the Persians were the readiest to adopt foreign customs.[1]

In this manner, without planning it, the Greeks decapitated the native nationalism. It is not the rajahs, but the young dreamers of dreams who overthrow the empires "with prophesying to the old of the new world's worth". These ambitious dreamers found this new world in the Greek city, in Seleucid service, or in Greek literature. Alexander's Romance was a more potent factor of hellenization than Homer.

Thus, the real hellenization of Iran began only after the end of the Seleucids; when the Iranian rulers, beginning with Mithridates I of Parthia, the "Philhellene", as he called himself, needed bright men of Greek education to manage the Seleucid inheritance. The Iranian elite, men who could enjoy the presentation of Euripides' *Bacchae* at the Parthian court, were no longer swallowed by the Greek polis, but remained Iranian, and trusted Ahuramazda again, and not Apollo. The Iranians became really hellenized when they believed that Greek wisdom was originally their own, borrowed by the Greeks from their ancestors after Alexander's conquest of Persia.[2] Historical myth is sometimes more philosophical than historical facts.[3]

APPENDIX
CHRONOLOGY OF THE SELEUCID DYNASTY

Seleucus I. 312–281 B.C.

312. Seleucus seizes Babylon. The (ante-dated) beginning of the Seleucid era.

312–305. Seleucus establishes his rule in Babylonia and Iran.

311. The (ante-dated) beginning of the Seleucid era, according to the Babylonian reckoning.

305. Seleucus, Ptolemy I of Egypt, and other Macedonian war lords assume royal title.

c. 305. Foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris.

c. 305–303. Seleucus conquers the Far East of Iran. Peace and amity with the Indian king.

[1] Herodotus I. 135.

[2] A. Abel, "La figure d'Alexandre en Iran" in *La Persia*, p. 123; similarly, the Jews regarded Solomon as the source of Greek wisdom; G. Vajda, "Le prologue de Qirsani" in *In memoriam Paul Kahle*, p. 225. Cf. p. 475 below.

[3] [For some details of Seleucid history see also ch. 2, pp. 32ff. and ch. 5, pp. 185ff.; for the development of religious thought in Seleucid Iran see ch. 22, pp. 821ff.; for the administration of the polis and the royal authority and titles of Seleucid kings see ch. 19, pp. 709ff. Ed.]

301 (summer). Seleucus and Lysimachus defeat Antigonus at Ipsus. Ptolemy I of Egypt seizes Phoenicia and Palestine.

300. Foundation of Antioch on the Orontes.

292. Antiochus (I), Seleucus' son, co-regent and viceroy of Mesopotamia and Iran.

281. Seleucus defeats Lysimachus and acquires Asia Minor.

281 (September). Seleucus I murdered.

Antiochus I. 281–261

280–279. War between Antiochus I and Ptolemy II of Egypt.

278. The Celts, coming from Macedonia, overrun Asia Minor.

275. Antiochus' victory over the Celts. Formation of Celtic state in Galatia.

274–271. War between Antiochus I and Ptolemy II.

261 (2 June) death of Antiochus I.

Antiochus II, son of Antiochus I. 261–246

260–253. War between Ptolemy II and Antiochus II, allied with Macedonia.

c. 260. The Persian Ariarathes founder of the Cappadocian kingdom.

252. Antiochus II marries Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy and sister of Ptolemy III, having divorced Laodice.

c. 250. The Parni, founders of the Parthian monarchy, in Bactria.

248/7. The (ante-dated) beginning of the Parthian (Arsacid) era.

246. Death of Antiochus II. Accession of Ptolemy III. Civil war between Laodice and Berenice. Egyptian intervention. Secession of Diodotus of Bactria.

Seleucus II, son of Antiochus II and Laodice. 246–225

245. Ptolemy III conquers Syria and Mesopotamia, and abandons these lands because of troubles in Egypt.

241. Peace between Ptolemy III and Seleucus II.

240. War between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax, his brother and viceroy in Asia Minor.

239. Defeat of Seleucus II.

238. Antiochus Hierax defeated by Attalus I of Pergamum. Attalus proclaimed king. Parthia invaded by the Parni.

237. Peace between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax.

c. 231. Seleucus' expedition against the Parthians.

230. War between Attalus I of Pergamum and Antiochus Hierax.

228. Defeat and end of Antiochus Hierax. The expansion of Pergamum in Asia Minor.

Seleucus III, son of Seleucus II. 226–223

Antiochus III, son of Seleucus II. 223–187

221–217. War between Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV.

220. Antiochus III defeats Molon, the rebellious viceroy of Mesopotamia and Iran.

217 (26 June). Ptolemy III defeats Antiochus III at Eaphia.

216–13. Conflict between Antiochus III and Achaeus, his viceroy in Asia Minor.

212–205. Antiochus III reconquers Far East.

200–198. Antiochus III against Ptolemy V. Conquest of Phoenicia and Palestine.

192–188. Antiochus III against Rome.

189. Antiochus defeated.

188. Peace with Rome. Antiochus loses Asia Minor.

Seleucus IV, son of Antiochus III. 187–175

Antiochus IV, brother of Seleucus IV. 175–164(?)

c. 170. Mithridates I of Parthia. Parthian expansion in Iran.

169–8. War between Antiochus IV and the Ptolemies. Antiochus conquers Egypt and abandons it on Rome's order.

167–164. Persecution and revolt in Judaea.

165–4. Antiochus' campaign in the East.

Antiochus V, son of Antiochus IV. 164(?)–162

Demetrius I, brother of Antiochus IV. 162–150

162. Demetrius seizes the throne. Revolt of Timarchus, the viceroy of Iran.

161. Defeat of Timarchus.

152. Beginning of the Maccabean State.

Alexander Balas, allegedly a son of Antiochus IV. 150–145

150. Balas, supported by Egypt, defeats Demetrius I. Egyptian influence in Syria.

Antiochus VI, Balas' son. 145–143/2

Demetrius II, son of Demetrius I. 145–139/8

145. War between Antiochus VI, supported by general Tryphon, and Demetrius II, supported by Egypt.

143/2–138. Tryphon against Demetrius II.

141. Parthians in Mesopotamia.

140–39. Demetrius II campaigns against the Parthians.

Antiochus VII, brother of Demetrius II. 139/8–129

130–29. Antiochus' VII's campaigns against the Parthians.

End of Seleucid rule in Iran.

CHAPTER 2

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF IRAN UNDER THE ARSACIDS

THE NATURE OF THE SOURCES

The history of the Parthian kingdom presents a special problem, since the sources on which it must be based are both fragmentary and extraneous. In the present state of knowledge, information originating from authentic Parthian sources is scanty in the extreme. Almost all the particulars available are derived from histories written in either Greek or Latin. Both the Seleucid kings of Syria, and the Roman republic and empire, the patrons of the majority of writers concerned with this subject, were frequently at war with Parthia, so that the tone of the writings is naturally often tinged with hostility. Yet more serious for our understanding than direct hostility (which could easily be discounted) is their lack of inner understanding of Parthia and its society. Such matters as the dominant Parthian ideals and aspirations, or the ethnic and linguistic make-up of the kingdom, would not have been apparent to uninformed observers under the stress of military operations. Moreover, the literary fashion of the classical world frowned on detailed descriptions of far-away peoples and places, as is clear from the scornful comment of Lucian[1] on the author of a Parthian history "who gives, according to his own idea, the clearest, most convincing description of every town, mountain, plain or river... Why, Vologesus's breeches or his bridle, God bless me, they take up several thousand lines apiece." Some at least of these supposedly unnecessary details would have the greatest interest for the present-day historian. Yet it is only occasionally that the prevailing narrowness of outlook of the classical historians is offset by details supplied by authors resident in the Greek cities within the Parthian state, and thus possessing closer acquaintance with the Arsacids and their society. Fragments from the lost *Parthica* of Apollodorus of Artemita, a Greek city of eastern Iraq, are often quoted in the *Geography* of Strabo.[2] Tarn believed that the detailed account of Parthian history contained in books XLI and XLII

[1] Lucian of Samosata, *The Way to Write History* (*Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*), 19.
[2] See W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1951), p. 44.

of the lost *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus[1] derived from a second Greek author, distinct from Apollodorus. Much of their content survives, though greatly abbreviated, in the *Epitome* of Justin, a work therefore indispensable for historians of Parthia, even though the failings of the epitomator are frequently blamed. The account of the overthrow of the Roman general Crassus at the battle of Carrhae narrated in Plutarch's *Life of Crassus* is thought to be derived from a Greek resident of Mesopotamia. Again, Isidore of Charax (the Hellenistic city at the head of the Persian Gulf) wrote the short but valuable itinerary *Parthian Stations*,[2] thought to be an extract from a longer work, the *Description of Parthia* mentioned by Athenaeus.[3] Isidore is dated to about the beginning of the Christian Era. Interesting details of the experiences of a visitor to Parthia some forty years later are found in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Otherwise the chief sources for the historian of Parthia are the occasional notices given by such western historians as Polybius, Dio Cassius and Tacitus.

These classical literary sources can be supplemented to some extent by epigraphic and documentary evidence. Certain inscriptions in Greek from Bīsitūn in Iran,[4] and from Susa, refer to the affairs of the Parthian kingdom. There are also a number of lapidary inscriptions in Parthian[5] and Aramaic. A further source of authentically Parthian information which is likely to increase as archaeological research advances is supplied by the finds of ostraca with Parthian inscriptions. The largest volumes so far have been excavated at Nisā in Soviet Turkmenistan,[6] and are concerned chiefly with arrangements for the delivery of consignments of wine. They contain information on land tenure, qualities of wine, official titles, and occasionally the names and regnal dates of rulers. Minor finds, of different content (some probably ration-lists or nominal rolls) have come from Dura-Europos in Syria, from Nippur in Iraq, and in Iran from Shahr-i Qūmis near Dāmghān.[7] Such ostraca are probably common objects on Parthian sites, and future finds should

[1] *Ibid.* p. 45. For Trogus see O. Seel, *Pompeius Trogus: fragmenta* (Bibliotheca Teubneriana), Leipzig, 1956.

[2] Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, ed. and tr. W. H. Schoff, 1914.

[3] *Deipnosophistae* III. 93d.

[4] E. Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 36f; W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci inscript. selectae* I (Leipzig, 1898), 641.

[5] At Sar-i Pul-i Zohāb, J. de Morgan, *Mission scientifique en Perse* IV (Paris, 1896), pp. 154–6 and figs. 144 (f), 145; G. Gopp, "Die parthische Inschrift von Sar-Pul-e Zohāb", *ZDMG* CXVIII (1968), pp. 315–19.

[6] Dyakonoff and Livshits, *Dokumenty iz Nisy*.

[7] A. D. H. Bivar, "The first Parthian ostracon from Iran", *JRAS* 1970, pp. 63–6.

give valuable information on Parthian chronology and dynastic Parthian titles. Parthian official titles indeed present considerable interest: *nwhdr* "commander" (or the like),[1] a term of which the association with this Parthian frontier is confirmed by the district name Beth Nuhadrā in northern Iraq;[2] *pṣgryb'* "successor" known from inscriptions at Hatra and at Urfa (Edessa);[3] and perhaps even the Syriac term *bwdr* (*bdr*), thought to reflect a Parthian word *bgdr* "custodian of the deity".[4]

There exists another source of information especially typical of the Arsacid Parthians, but not always easy to interpret in strict historical terms. This is the oral poetry of the Parthian minstrels, who were known in Parthian by the term *gōsān*.[5] Some of their poems dealt with historical or epic themes, and have been preserved through incorporation in surviving poems in modern Persian. Among such survivals are the narratives of Rustam and of Godarz – relating in fact to events of Parthian times – preserved in the section of the *Shāh-nāma* dealing with the reign of Kai Kāvūs, and thus out of their true chronological context. Another Parthian survival is represented by the romantic poem *Vīs u Rāmīn*, which, as Minorsky has shown,[6] contains many details which suggest an Arsacid background, but can hardly be referred to any precise historical context.

The scattered nature of the sources for Arsacid history, and in particular the relevance of many brief mentions in the longer works of classical authors devoted primarily to other themes, makes a guide to the relevant literature essential for the modern student. Gutschmid's basic work[7] remains useful, but contains several misleading theories and should not be accepted uncritically. That of Debevoise is still probably the most complete and up to date for this purpose, though its rather prosaic style makes continuous reading laborious. It is used extensively in the pages that follow. The author's coverage of the periodical literature is especially thorough. Rawlinson's older account, though

[1] W. B. Henning, "A new Parthian inscription", *JRAS* 1953, p. 136; A. Maricq, "Hatra de Sanatrouq", p. 6 n 1.

[2] E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les "Res gestae divi Saporis"* (Brussels, 1953), p. 124; E. Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire* (Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 228.

[3] Maricq, pp. 4ff.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 143.

[5] Boyce, "The Parthian *gōsān*", p. 17. See also pp. 388–91 and 1155 ff. in this volume on Parthian oral literature.

[6] V. Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn", in *Iranica: Twenty Articles* (London–Tehran, 1964), pp. 178–88.

[7] A. von Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans und seiner Nachbarländer* (Tübingen, 1888).

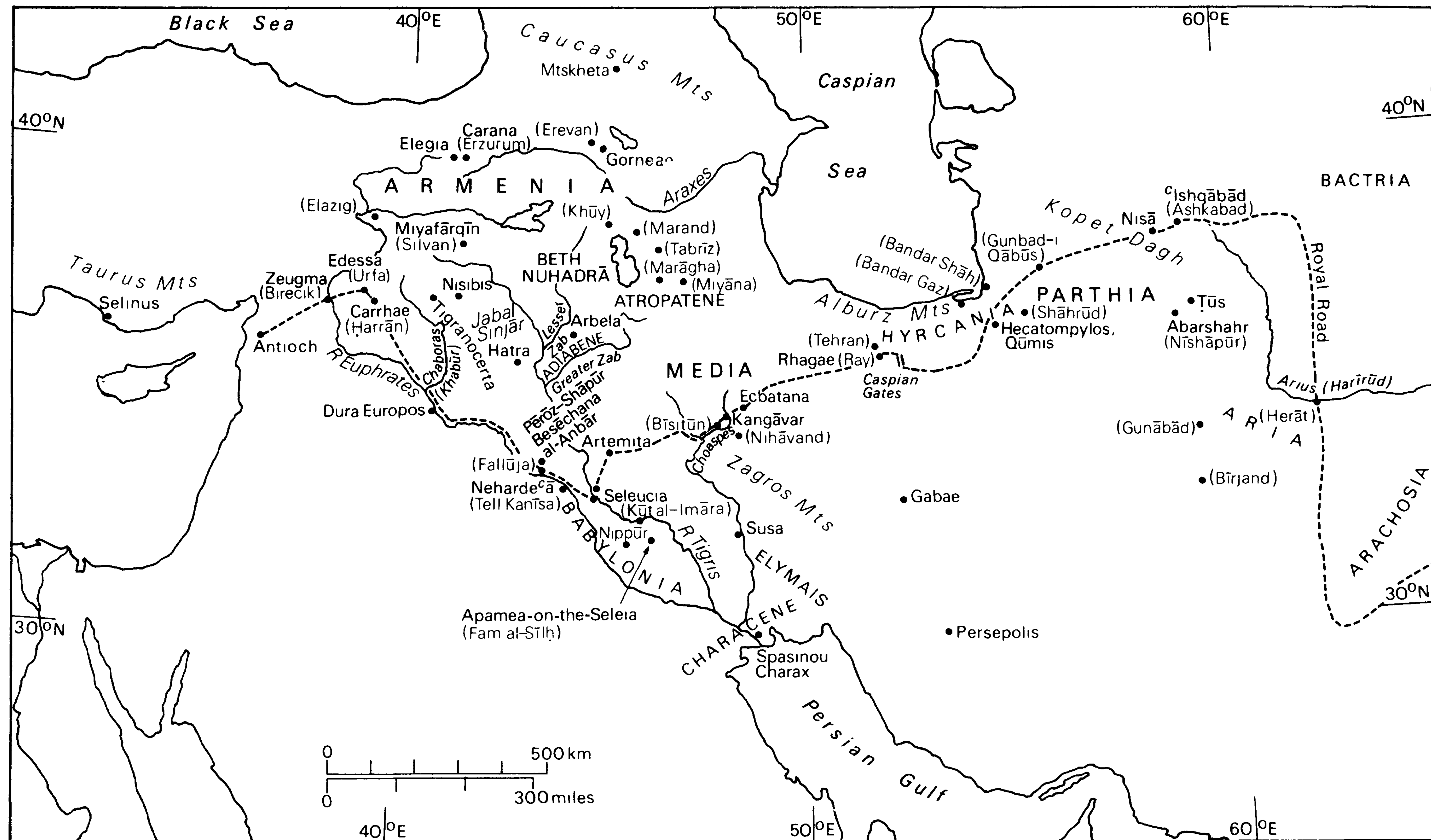
naturally dated, is still of considerable service. The most recent full-length discussion of Parthian history is that of Neusner, whose emphasis is on the Jewish texts and Jewish connections, and inevitably in other respects finds the classical sources much as they had appeared to earlier writers.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The ancient satrapy which once occupied the north-east angle of present-day Iran, and overlapped the boundary of Asiatic Soviet territory, had been known under the name of Parthava since the days of Darius' Bīsitūn inscription (521 B.C.), and indeed long before.[1] Yet its borders, which no doubt grew and shrank with the vicissitudes of history, are none too easy to define in detail. Under Darius, Parthia and Hyrcania formed in some sense a unit, as we may infer from their juxtaposition in the text of the inscription: *Parθava*: *uta*: *Varkāna*: *hamiçiyā*: *abava*: *hačāma* "Parthia and Hyrcania became rebellious towards me." Both were then the concern of Vištāspa, satrap of Parthia and father of the king. The two towns of Višpauzāti and Patigrabana lay within the boundaries of Parthia, but their sites are unknown today. For the amalgamation of Hyrcania and Parthia there are indications also in late Seleucid times. The ancient western boundary of Hyrcania, the modern Gurgān province, lay, if we may depend on evidence of the Sasanian period, at the south-east corner of the Caspian Sea, more precisely along the Sasanian wall of which the traces can still be seen running from between the villages of Sarkalāta and Kārkanda towards the sea a few kilometres east of Bandar Gaz.[2] Between Hyrcania and Parthia proper the line must have run through the hills lying east of the present town of Gunbad-i Qābūs, but is not easily fixed at any point upon the ground.

Southwards from its junction with Hyrcania the investigation of the boundary of Parthia raises different problems. In the inscription of the Sasanian Shāpūr I, drafted towards A.D. 260, a distinction is made between the provinces of Parthia and Abarshahr. The latter is the earlier name of the city which has come to be known as Nīshāpūr, but which some authorities have sought to derive from the name of the Aparni, a tribe soon to assume a prominent place in our story. It is

[1] For references going back to the time of Esarhaddon, *c.* 673 B.C., see Debevoise, p. 3.
[2] A. D. H. Bivar and G. Fehérvári, "The walls of Tammīsha", *Iran* IV (1966), p. 40.



Map 1. The Parthian empire (for other locations see map 14, p. 748).

possible that the Sasanians deliberately separated Abarshahr from the remainder of Parthia. There is, however, no hint of its existence as a separate administrative unit under the Achaemenians, and Herzfeld invoked a passage of the Arab geographer Yāqūt as evidence that under the Arsacids the province of Parthia extended as far south in Khurāsān as Gunābād and Bīrjand.[1] This hypothesis was to some extent supported by the discovery of inscriptions in Parthian at Kal-i Jangāl near Bīrjand.[2] To the westward, the natural boundary of the province was formed by the historically famous pass of the Caspian Gates, securely fixed by modern research in the defile of Sar-i Darra, 87 kilometres east of Tehran on the old Khurāsān road.[3] Thus in the south-westerly direction Parthia surrounded Hyrcania on the southern side. On the eastern flank, the dividing line from Aria, the province of Herāt, will have run on or near the lower course of the Harīrūd, and close to the present frontier of Afghanistan. By the combination of several texts, Herzfeld was able to infer that the city of Ṭūs was the capital of the Achaemenian province of Parthava. Presumably it was therefore the residence of Vištāspa, the father of Darius, who was satrap of that province according to the Bīsitūn inscription.

North of the Kopet Dāgh range, beyond the present-day frontier of Iran with the U.S.S.R. but again within the ancient Parthia, ran a narrow strip of cultivable land watered by streams from the mountains. This is the area served today by the line of the Trans-Caspian railway. By the end of the 3rd century B.C., if not indeed earlier, considerable towns were beginning to form in this region. The two ancient settlements of Nisā ("Old" and "New" Nisā) lay a few miles to the west of the present city of Ashkabad ('Ishqābād) in Soviet Turkmenistan. Further to the east was the ancient site of Abīvard, at Kuhna Abīvard, 8.5 kilometres west of the railway station of Kahkala (Kākhka) on the Trans-Caspian railway. Also in this same ancient district of Apavarcticene, it may be inferred, lay the stronghold of Dara, built by Tiridates I of Parthia (see below, p. 769). Northward from the mountain fringe stretched an arid steppe, the home of the nomadic peoples who were to play the dominant part in the subsequent history of the Parthian kingdom. The first explicit mentions of this nomad confederacy, the Dāha (Latin "Dahae"), come in the list of nations of the famous

[1] Herzfeld, *Persian Empire*, p. 322.

[2] Henning, "A new Parthian inscription", p. 132. According to R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (London, 1962), p. 194, the correct form of the name should be Kal-i Janggāh.

[3] Herzfeld, *Persian Empire*, p. 317; cf. J. Hansman, "The problems of Qūmis".

"Daeva" Inscription of Xerxes at Persepolis, and in Yasht 13.[1] They are followed in the list by a "Scythian" group, the Saka Haumavarga, whose habitat was around the delta of the Jaxartes, modern Syr Darya; and who are thus appropriately listed as neighbours of the Dāha. Amongst the various tribal groups included in the confederacy of the Dahae, the most prominent were the Parni, also called the Aparni, from among whom the dynasty of the Arsacids drew their origin. Lesser tribes, of whom mention is made, were the Xanthii and the Pissuri. So far as the linguistic affinities of these peoples are concerned, it is plausible to assume that the north-west Iranian dialect that is known in a later period as "Parthian" should be the original dialect of the Iranian cultivators of the province of Parthia. To the incoming Parni may rather be ascribed a form of speech showing a stronger east Iranian element, resulting from their proximity on the steppe to the east Iranian Sakas. Instances of east Iranian loan-words surviving in Parthian have been discussed by Henning.[2] They recall the phrase of Justin,[3] no doubt slightly exaggerated: "Their speech was midway between Scythian and Median, and contained features of both."

The tribal group of the Dahae bequeathed their name to the province on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, which throughout the Islamic Middle Ages retained the designation of Dihistan, even though its original occupants had disappeared. It was the regular medieval custom in Iranian-speaking lands for the provincial name to be applied to the headquarters city (e.g. Gurgān, Kirmān). In the case of Dihistan, this name has become attached in later usage to no less than three of the towns: to one on the Caspian coast; to the old provincial centre of Ākhur in Soviet Turkmenistan, twenty-three farsakhs (some seventy miles) north of Jurjān, modern Gunbaḍ-i Qābūs; and to a place called by the Arab geographers Ribāṭ, later Mashhad-i Miṣriyān, the well-known Islamic fortified site in the same territory.[4] However, there are no reports of archaeological finds relating to the Parthian period from any of these places, and the urban centre of the ancient Dahae (if indeed they possessed one) is quite unknown.

[1] H. Lommel, *Die Yäshts des Awesta* (Göttingen/Leipzig, 1927), p. 129 n2 (= Yašt 13 [Farvardīn Yasht]: 144). T. Burrow, "The Proto-Indoaryans", *JRAS* 1973, pp. 137–8, dates this text shortly before *c.* 900 B.C.

[2] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 93.

[3] Justin XLI. 1: Sermo his inter Scythicum Medicumque medius et utrimque mixtus.

[4] A. M. Pribytkova, *Material of the architecture of Turkmenia* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 143–8.

THE BEGINNING OF ARSACID RULE

The first fixed point in Parthian history is provided by the starting-point of the Arsacid era, the vernal equinox of 247 B.C. The significance for the Parthians of this moment in time has been variously explained: by Gardner[1] it was seen as the date of a Parthian revolt against Seleucid suzerainty; by Tarn, as the coronation year of Tiridates I, the second Parthian king.[2] Another evident possibility is that it could represent the actual enthronement year of Arsaces I, the founder and eponym of the dynasty. However, this less sophisticated theory has until recently proved difficult to reconcile with the literary accounts relating to the foundation of the Arsacid kingdom. The plausibility of yet a fourth explanation for the origin of the era in 247 B.C. should also not be lost to view. Since the year 246 B.C. was the last of the reign of Antiochus II over the Seleucid empire, and allowance has moreover to be made for the autonomous reign of the satrap Andragoras in Parthia, it may be that 247 B.C. was reckoned the last year of legitimate Seleucid authority in the province, and that Arsaces subsequently backdated his regnal years to this moment and ignored the unconstitutional episode of Andragoras.

The literary sources for the rise of the Arsacid dynasty have recently been re-examined in a series of articles by Wolski.[3] Whilst the view had previously prevailed that the tribe of the Parni rose against the Seleucid authority in about 250 B.C., or at any rate shortly before 247 B.C., this scholar embarked upon a detailed source-criticism of the ancient texts which refer to the event, and has concluded that the version provided by Justin and Strabo[4] is a distinct tradition, and superior to that represented by the fragments of Arrian's *Parthica* in Photius and Syncellus, and the statements of Eusebius. In Wolski's view, therefore, the authentic version is that the Seleucid satrapy of Bactria established its autonomy of the Seleucid kingdom in about 239 B.C. under its governor Diodotus; and that Arsaces established his independent rule in Parthia in the following year, 238 B.C. Shortly afterwards must have taken place the inconclusive eastern campaign of the Seleucid ruler Seleucus II Callinicus. After a number of skir-

[1] P. Gardner, *The Parthian Coinage* (International Numismata Orientalia Part v) (London, 1877), p. 3.

[2] W. W. Tarn, "Parthia", *CAH* IX, p. 576.

[3] Wolski, "L'effondrement de la domination des Séleucides", and more especially "The decay of the Iranian Empire of the Seleucids".

[4] Strabo XI. 9. 2; Justin XLI. iv.

mishes with the Parthians, he was obliged by further disturbances in Asia Minor to return to Antioch, and leave the newly founded Parthian kingdom to its own devices. In Wolski's opinion, indeed, "The so-called Arsacid era and the numismatic evidence are of no importance" for the question of chronology.[1] Such an attitude may be thought extreme; yet if Wolski's interpretation of the literary sources can indeed be reconciled with a satisfactory explanation of the inauguration of the Arsacid era, as on the lines suggested above, it would be possible to arrive at an acceptable sequence of events.

Accordingly, we might conclude that the epoch of 247 B.C. marks rather the commencement of the bid by Andragoras for power in Parthia than that of Arsaces and his Parni. The historicity of Andragoras is confirmed by the discovery of his gold and silver coins in the Oxus Treasure[2] and more recently, by a Greek inscription published by Robert.[3] The latter, indeed, refers to Andragoras as a satrap already under Antiochus I, and suggests that he may have held his office for nearly twenty years before he was overcome by the Parni. This circumstance makes it less likely that the satrap's rule could have been prolonged to so late a date as 238 B.C.

According to what may have been regarded as the traditional account, the revolt of the Parni against Andragoras was led by two brothers, Arsaces the founder, and Tiridates; the latter is the Tiridates I of the Arsacid dynastic table. After the death of Arsaces, at a date not precisely known, Tiridates succeeded to the throne. He reigned until about 211 B.C., shortly before the eastern campaign of Antiochus III the Great. His successor, who apparently occupied the throne during the hostilities against Antiochus, was Artabanus I. The peace terms eventually agreed by the Parthians with Antiochus involved their formal acceptance of a feudatory status; but the rapid withdrawal of the Seleucid forces when Antiochus returned to the west, and in 189 B.C. sustained defeat at the hands of the Romans in the battle of Magnesia, meant that in fact the young kingdom was subjected to little interference. In about 191 B.C. Artabanus was in turn succeeded by his son Priapatius.

The sketchy nature of the historical sources for these opening

[1] Wolski, "Decay of the Iranian Empire", p. 36. Cf. Lukonin's discussion, pp. 686ff. below, which tends to confirm Arrian in some respects. Ed.

[2] *BMC Arabia etc.*, p. ccliii; Alfred R. Bellinger, "The coins from the Treasure of the Oxus", *ANSMN* x (1962), 66.

[3] L. Robert, "Inscription hellénistique d'Iran", *Hellenica* XI–XII (1960), 85–91.

decades of the Arsacid kingdom has given rise to a number of sceptical hypotheses. One of these regarded the first Arsaces as a legendary figure, and tended to ascribe to Tiridates I the chief role in the establishment of the kingdom. Another interpretation, which was developed by Wolski, involved the assumption that Tiridates was legendary, and that in fact the first Arsaces reigned for more than thirty years. Moreover, Wolski rejects the historicity of an "Artabanus I" at this period, and interprets to the letter the statement of Justin (XLI 5. 6) that the son and successor of Arsaces was known by the same name.[1] The majority of recent commentators accept Wolski's view, and commence the Arsacid dynastic list with Arsaces I and II. Yet plausible though this reasoning seems, the scanty evidence seems hardly sufficient to establish conclusively either of the two hypotheses or wholly to eliminate the possibility that certain elements of truth could be present in both the main historical traditions. Accordingly, the accompanying dynastic tables include both the older chronology, and that based on the views of Wolski, and subsequently elaborated by Le Rider. Moreover, the ostraca discovered in recent years at Nisā have tended to weigh against the more recent theories. Whilst the ostraca contain only fragmentary data of interest from the viewpoint of political history, such indications as they do provide harmonize satisfactorily with the "traditional" narrative. The text which has been most widely discussed for its historical implications in this connection is Ostracon No. 1760.[2] It will be helpful to quote here the reading of this document which was proposed by Dyakonov and Livshits:

ŠNT i c xx xx x iii iii i 'ršk MLK' BRY BR[Y Z]Y (?) Pryptk
BRY 'ḤY BRY ZY (?) 'ršk

"In the year 157 of King Arsaces, grandson of Priapatius, (who was) son of the nephew of Arsaces".

Each of the succeeding Arsacid rulers was known during his lifetime by the throne-name Arsaces, a custom which does nothing to facilitate the work of the historian or numismatist.[3] None the less the Arsacid

[1] Wolski, "Arsace II", *Eos* XLI (1946), 160; Wolski, "Arsace II et la généalogie des Arsacides", *Historia* XI (1962), 145.

[2] Dyakonoff and Livshits, p. 20. Cf. M.-L. Chaumont, "Les ostraca de Nisa", *JA* (1968), p. 15; Bickerman, "The Parthian ostracon no. 1760 from Nisa", each offering a slightly different reconstruction. [See p. 687 below for further evidence from the ostraca.]

[3] Cf. Strabo XV. 1. 36. *Ἀρσάκαι γὰρ καλοῦνται πάντες, ἰδίᾳ δὲ ὁ μὲν Ὀρώδης, ὁ δὲ Φραάτης, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο τι.* "Every one of them is named Arsaces, but individually one is Orodes, another Phraates, and yet another something else."

date, *anno* 157, included in the text fixes it to the year 91 B.C., and thus suggests that the ruler under whom it was written would have been either Mithradates II (*c.* 123–88/7 B.C.) or Gotarzes I (91–81/80 B.C.) whose reigns overlapped at this time during several years. Mithradates II was indeed, and Gotarzes I may well have been, grandsons of Priapatius, and the latter in turn a nephew's son of the first Arsaces. The historicity of the first Arsaces, and the general correctness of the succession, as transmitted by the classical historians, is thus confirmed. The genealogical table compiled by Frye is based on these assumptions,[1] but those offered by Chaumont and Bickerman depend on somewhat varied interpretations, and must be subject to reservations. There seems at any rate sufficient justification for accepting the traditional version of events: that Arsaces, chief of the Parni, and perhaps originally a local ruler in Bactria, crushed Andragoras, veteran satrap of Parthia and Hyrcania in about 238 B.C. and mastered those provinces. He repelled the punitive expedition of Seleucus II, and was succeeded by his able brother Tiridates. The latter in turn was succeeded by his son Artabanus I, who opposed the invasion of Antiochus III in 209 B.C. Artabanus again was succeeded by his son Priapatius, who reigned for fifteen years to 176 B.C., and bequeathed the throne to his eldest son, Phraates I. Under the reign of the latter, the expansion of the Parthian kingdom began once more.

The incursion of Antiochus III had interrupted the Arsacid control of that part of the province of Parthia which lies south of the Alburz Range around Dāmghān and Shāhrūd. Phraates I not only reasserted Parthian jurisdiction up to the Caspian Gates, but even beyond; for he was able to establish a garrison of Mardians, tribesmen of Māzandarān, at the strongpoint of Charax immediately on the western side of the Gates.[2] Thus he prepared the way for the Parthian advance into the province of Media, still at this period a strongly held outpost of the Seleucid empire with its headquarters at Ecbatana, the modern Hamadān. However, the conquest of Media for the Parthian kingdom was to remain a task for his son and successor, the mighty Mithradates I, whose accession to the throne is reckoned to have taken place in about 171 B.C., and who is to be considered the real author of Parthian expansion to the rank of a world-empire.

[1] Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, p. 294. Cf. Lukonin's reconstruction, p. 688 below.
[2] Isidore of Charax, *Parthian stations*, p. 7.

THE EXPANSION OF ARSACID POWER

Meanwhile, in 175 B.C., a grandiose personality, the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes, had seized the Syrian throne at Antioch to avenge the assassination of his brother Seleucus IV Philopator. Sensitive to the threat which the Parthians represented to his eastern provinces, he devised (if the thesis of Tarn be accepted)[1] an elaborate scheme to restore the situation. In Bactria, he raised the formidable figure of Eucratides to expel the princes of the Euthydemid house who were no more than rebels in his eyes. As governor of Media he installed his powerful minister Timarchus, whose later alliance with Eucratides is evidenced by the parallelism of their coins.[2] It was not until nearly eight years later, when the position of Eucratides was well established, that Antiochus himself moved to take charge of operations in the Seleucid east. He was successful in reducing King Artaxias of Armenia to vassalage, and the attribution of the name Epiphania to Ecbatana has been linked with his activity.[3] None the less, the imprecision of the ancient sources makes it difficult to construct an intelligible narrative of his subsequent movements in Iran. He is said to have coveted the treasures of a temple of Artemis (Nanaia) in Elymais;[4] to have tried to get possession of them by the device of a ritual marriage to the goddess, an expedient that had been employed elsewhere; to have been repelled by the indignant citizens; to have been driven out of Persepolis by a rising of the inhabitants;[5] to have returned to Ecbatana, and to have been gravely injured in a fall from his chariot. Finally he is said to have died at Tabae,[6] which must be

[1] Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 196–8.

[2] For the coins of Timarchus, especially the tetradrachms with the helmeted bust and reverse type of the Dioscuri, see Le Rider, *Suse*, pp. 332–4.

[3] Stephanus Byzantinus, *De Urbibus*, *s.v.*

[4] 2 Maccabees i. 13–15, seemingly confirmed by Polybius XXXI. 9. 11, since the Greek authors regularly speak of Nanaia (Anahita) as Artemis. Yet the apparent implication of 2 Maccabees that Antiochus himself was killed on this occasion must be untrue, and it is better to follow 1 Maccabees vi. 4 (presumably narrating the same episode) which asserts that Antiochus IV fled from the city where the temple stood.

[5] According to 2 Maccabees ix. 2, the city in which Antiochus had sought to despoil the temple was Persepolis. It is not, however, clear whether this is a different episode from that noticed above; or whether, since 1 Maccabees vi confusedly states that Elymais was a *city* in Persia, all these allusions refer to a single episode.

[6] Tabae is actually situated in western Anatolia, some ninety miles south-east of Ephesus, and can have no connection with these events. There is no evidence for a place of similar name in Iran, and the best commentators make the small emendation in Polybius XXXI, 11, 3 to Gabae. For a commentary on the last days of Antiochus IV, see especially M. Holleaux, *Etudes d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques*, III, Paris, 1942, pp. 264–7; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 311. The discussion by Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 463–6, is interesting, but a little arbitrary.

corrected to Gabae, the old name of Jay, now a suburb of Iṣfahān. His death took place between 20 November and 18 December 164 B.C., and whatever the exact sequence of events during his last months, he was never in a position to embark on military operations against the steadily growing power of Parthia.

Meanwhile Mithradates I, the real founder of Parthia as a major power, had ascended the Parthian throne, and was awaiting the time when his plans for the expansion of his kingdom could be put into effect. To the east he had to face the powerful Graeco-Bactrian ruler Eucratides. Not only did Mithradates secure his own frontier, but he succeeded in annexing the Bactrian eparchies of Tapuria and Traxiana. To the south-west, in Media, was the ally of Eucratides, Timarchus. Though the latter was soon overthrown by the new Seleucid claimant, Demetrius I Soter, it is likely to have been more than a decade before the situation was ripe for the definitive Parthian advance. Numismatic studies have shown that after the fall of Timarchus, coins were struck at Ecbatana not only for Demetrius I (161–150 B.C.), but also during the opening years of Alexander Balas (150–145 B.C.).[1] The advance of Mithradates against Ecbatana has been placed in 148 or 147 B.C., a conclusion which finds confirmation in the Greek inscription associated with the figure of Heracles uncovered a few years ago at Bīsitūn:[2]

> In the year 164 and the month Panēmos
> Hyakinthos, son of Pantaukhos
> [erected this statue of]
> Heracles Triumphant
> for the safety of Kleomenes,
> Viceroy of the Upper Satrapies.

Here the year 164 of the Seleucid era corresponds to 149/8 B.C. ($312-164+1 = 149$), and the month Panēmos is the seventh of the Macedonian calendar (of which the year began in October), so that Panēmos in general terms would have fallen in June 148 B.C. At this moment it appears that a Seleucid viceroy still held office in Media, but his safety was giving rise to anxiety so acute as to prompt the erection of such a dedication. The occupation of Media by Mithradates I may have taken place at any time after this moment, but the indications are that the interval was not more than a year, and may well have been a matter of weeks.

[1] G. K. Jenkins, "Notes on Seleucid coins", *NC* 1951, p. 8; Le Rider, *Suse*, pp. 338–40.

[2] For the Greek text, cf. ʿAlī Ḥākimī, "Mujassama-yi Hirkūl dar Bīsitūn", *Majalla-yi Bāstānshināsī* III and IV (Tehran, 1338/1959–60), pp. 3–12; Robert, *Gnomon* 1963, p. 76; Robert, "Encore une inscription grecque de l'Iran", *CRAI* 1967, pp. 283, 291.

Meanwhile, the involved struggles for the Seleucid succession at Antioch were sapping the control of the dynasty over its outlying provinces, and preparing the way for a further advance of Mithradates. For an understanding of the circumstances of Parthian expansion at this moment, it is necessary to give a summary of events in the Seleucid kingdom. After the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, his cunning minister Lysias made the accession of his son, the child-king Antiochus V Eupator, the pretext for an exercise of his own authority. The elder cousin Demetrius, then a hostage at Rome, effected his escape to Syria, was acclaimed as king, put both child and minister to death, and crushed Timarchus as already described. But twelve years later Alexander Balas, claimed as the second son of Epiphanes, was set up against him as a pretender, and supported by Ptolemy Philometor of Egypt. In 150 B.C. Demetrius met his fate in battle against the new claimant. Yet the reign of Balas was to last only five years. Then the eldest surviving son of Demetrius Soter, a youth in his teens, and also named Demetrius (II), raised a force of Cretan mercenaries and landed in Syria. Balas made the mistake of quarrelling with his Egyptian patron, who switched his support to Demetrius, and in the ensuing battle Balas was routed, and a few days later hunted down. Ptolemy, who took part personally in the battle on the side of Demetrius, was fatally wounded, so that Demetrius II remained in complete control of the Seleucid kingdom. He was able to secure recognition of his rule at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, where four coin issues have been attributed to him.[1] Susa, however, had passed in 147 B.C. into the power of Kamniskires, the king of Elymais, and was never again recovered by the Seleucid authorities.[2]

As early as the late summer of 145 B.C. the military commander Tryphon set up an infant son of Balas, Antiochus VI, as king in opposition to Demetrius, and even gained possession of Antioch. Demetrius meanwhile held the greater part of the Syrian coast. Then in the east during 141 B.C. Mithradates invaded Babylonia and occupied Seleucia. Tetradrachms are attributed to him in the series of this mint for the year 141/40 B.C., and there are dated issues for the years 140/39 and 139/8.[3] Mithradates then withdrew to his residence in Hyrcania, but his forces pressed on southwards to defeat the army of Elymais at Apamea near the modern Qūṭ al-ʿAmāra. Soon afterwards the Parthians were able to occupy Susa, where coins were again struck for Mithradates. Meanwhile, appeals for help from the Greeks of Babylonia

[1] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 150. [2] *Ibid.* p. 75. [3] *Ibid.* p. 364.

reached Demetrius in Syria, and "in the hundred threescore and twelfth year"[1] (312 − 172 + 1 = 141/0 B.C.), that is to say, during the spring of 140 B.C., he gathered a force and moved into Babylonia and perhaps Media. Apparently Demetrius II hoped not only to recover these provinces from the generals of Mithradates, but also to raise in the east loyal reinforcements with which he could return to overcome the usurpur Tryphon. None the less, his audacity and some early successes were in vain. In the following year (139 B.C.), defeated and taken prisoner by one of the Parthian generals, he was paraded through the cities which the Parthians had won. Finally, Demetrius was sent to Mithradates in Hyrcania. The Arsacid not only treated him kindly, but while holding him as a prisoner, even gave him his daughter Rhodogune as a wife.

After the capture of Demetrius II, resistance to the generals of Mithradates was at an end in Babylonia. The Persians, the Elymaeans and, it is said, the Bactrians had made common cause with Demetrius, and it was against the Elymaeans that the Parthian troops were now unleashed. Their temples, both of "Athena" and of "Artemis", the latter known as the Azara, were pillaged, it is said, of ten thousand talents of treasure; and their capital city, Seleucia-on-the-Hedyphon, was taken.[2] This was the moment, in the closing months of Mithradates' reign, when the Parthian empire attained for the time its maximum extent. According to the account given by the late author Orosius,[3] "He defeated the governor of Demetrius and invaded the city of Babylon, and all the boundaries of its province. Furthermore he subjugated all the provinces which lie between the Hydaspes and the Indus." Some commentators have sought to identify the Hydaspes here with the river of that name, now the Jhelum, situated in the Punjab. Yet it is hardly possible that the power of Mithradates extended so far into the kingdom of the Graeco-Bactrian kings. More probable is the view which links the name Hydaspes here with the "Median Hydaspes" of Virgil.[4] Here the name seems but an alternative for the Choaspes, the modern Karkha, which indeed rises in the mountains of Media. And the territory won by Mithradates thus extended from the Karkha along the shores of the Persian Gulf to the mouth of the Indus in Sind.[5]

[1] *Ibid.* p. 361. [2] Strabo XVI. 744. [3] I. 2, 18. [4] *Georgics* IV. 211.
[5] Cf. P. Daffinà, *L'immigrazione dei Sakā nella Drangiana* (Rome, 1967), pp. 41–3.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE PARTHIAN KINGDOM

The reign of Mithradates I came to an end in 138/7 B.C., the first precisely established regnal date of Parthian history. His rule had been both long and prosperous, lasting as it did for more than forty-three years. During his last months, however, a new threat was growing to the rising power of Parthia, and this was to become the chief preoccupation of his immediate successors. Disturbances along the area of the Chinese frontier had set on foot a large-scale westward migration in Central Asia. The powerful tribal confederation of the Yueh-chi, apparently identical with that known to the classical writers as the Tochari, had been attacked by their Altaic neighbours the Hsiung-nu (ancestors, it seems, of the later Huns), and driven pell-mell from their grazing-grounds in Kansu province. The Yueh-chi emigrated westwards, probably by way of Turfan and Qarashahr, and along the Ili River. In the course of their march they collided from time to time with another formidable horde, the Wu-sun, who may have been identical with the Issedones mentioned by Herodotus and other classical writers. Finally, passing Lake Issik Kol, the Yüeh-chih emerged from the mountains once more onto the steppe, defeating and driving before them the Saka tribes who had pastured there since the days of the Achaemenian empire. These Saka peoples seem to have been of eastern Iranian speech, and may well have included ancestors of the Afghans, the present-day speakers of Pashto.

Thus it came about that the displaced Sacae, of whom the group most prominently mentioned was that of the Sacaraucae (Saka rawaka), began to impinge on the Parthian boundaries early in the reign of Phraates II (139/8–*c.* 128 B.C.). They may indeed have already appeared in the last days of Mithradates I. Yet before matters reached a crisis on the eastern frontier of Parthia, Phraates was faced with a fresh onslaught from another direction.

In Syria, the usurper Tryphon continued to rule over the greater part of the country, with his main strength in Apamea and in Antioch. Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy Philometor of Egypt, who had been married to Demetrius II who was now captive, held out in Seleucia-in-Pieria on the Syrian coast. Despairing of making headway alone against the usurper, she called in her brother-in-law Antiochus, the younger son of Demetrius Soter who had been brought up at Side, and offered him her hand. Thus Antiochus was acclaimed king, becom-

ing known to historians as Antiochus VII Sidetes. Commanding as a legitimate claimant the loyalty of the Macedonian population, he soon overcame Tryphon, and once more succeeded in unifying the Syrian kingdom. Then in 130 B.C. he mustered a powerful army, which one account claims consisted of eighty thousand foot,[1] and for which other sources allege the incredible total of three hundred thousand, and set out to expel the Parthians from Babylonia. At first his boldness was rewarded. Antiochus defeated the Parthians in three battles. In one, on the River Lycus (Greater Zāb) he overcame the Parthian general Indates. Enius, the Parthian governor of Babylonia, was massacred in a rising of the citizens. At Susa, a little-known usurper named Tigraios had been issuing copper coins from 137 B.C. to 133/2 B.C., when a sporadic issue in the name of Antiochus is recorded for the mint. Antiochus advanced into Media, where, as winter drew on, he sent his army into winter quarters. Already men began to speak of him as the Great King.

In the circumstances that prevailed, the large numbers of the Seleucid force no doubt proved something of an embarrassment. It was necessary to disperse them among the several cities, and even then the feeding of them became a burden for the inhabitants. Nevertheless, the situation of Phraates II and the Parthians looked dangerous, and emissaries came to Antiochus to discuss terms for a settlement. The attitude taken by the young king was uncompromising. Peace would not be made unless the captive king Demetrius was set free, unless the Parthians relinquished all territory outside the province of Parthia, and once more paid tribute to the Seleucids as in former times. Understandably, Phraates broke off the negotiations. But he released Demetrius, and sent him home to Syria, in the hope of creating a diversion in Antiochus's rear.

As the spring of 129 B.C. came in, the cities of Media became restive under the burden of supplying the Seleucid garrisons, and moreover they were oppressed by the general Athenaeus. The agents of Phraates found it an easy task to stir up the citizens to attack the Seleucid troops, disorganized now by the inactivity of the winter. When Antiochus hastened out with his household troops to support the nearest detachments, he was surprised by the appearance of the main Parthian force. He sustained the attack against the advice of his officers, found himself left alone when his men were put to flight, and so lost his life. The

[1] Justin XXXVIII. 10. 2.

great Seleucid army was thus completely routed, and captured or slain almost to a man. The number of killed was put at the prodigious figure of three hundred thousand, but as the aftermath shows many were taken prisoner. Amongst them was the young Seleucus, son of Antiochus Sidetes, later brought up as a prince at the Parthian court; and the daughter of Demetrius, who found a place in the royal harem. As for the body of Antiochus, it was treated with all possible honour, and returned to Syria for burial in a silver coffin.

After his victory over the Seleucid, Phraates had determined to advance on Syria. But the Saka invasion on his eastern frontier obliged him to abandon this plan. Already during the war with Antiochus VII, Saka mercenaries were being enlisted for the Parthian armies. For them, the sudden end of the campaign came as a surprise. Finding that they had arrived too late to take part in the fighting, the nomads were reluctant to accept dismissal without wages, and demanded either that their expenses should be paid, or that they should be employed against another enemy. When both were refused, the Sakas fell to ravaging Parthian territory, and some are said to have penetrated as far west as Mesopotamia. The main body of their tribesmen were pressing on behind, and already, so it seems, had swept away the Greek settlements in Bactria. Now the chief preoccupation of Phraates was to repel the advancing Sakas. Just as he had tried to divert *their* ferocity against the Seleucid forces, so now he pressed the prisoners from the army of Antiochus into service to oppose the new invaders. He may have counted on the fact that they would be facing unknown foes in a strange land, and would have to fight for their lives. But when the armies met, and the Greeks saw that the Parthians were hard pressed, they deserted to the enemy. Thus the Parthians were overwhelmed, and in the slaughter which followed (128 B.C.), Phraates himself was killed.[1]

The succeeding Arsacid ruler, Artabanus II (*c.* 128 B.C.–124/3) had again to contend with the nomad threat to Parthia. Yet problems arise from the statement of Justin that it was the Tochari against whom he waged war.[2] Since previously Phraates II had been engaged with the Sacaraucae, and it was known that the Tochari had been advancing behind the latter, and were thought at this moment to have been settled north of the Oxus, there is difficulty in the narrative which brings them into contact with Artabanus II of Parthia. Tarn indeed dismissed

[1] Justin XLII. 1.

[2] Justin XLII. 2.

as impossible the statement that the Tochari were involved with Parthia at this moment.[1] Yet where the sources are so fragmentary as for these incidents, and the detailed succession of events so little known, it is best to retain the evidence of the texts so far as possible. In any event, Artabanus is reported to have died in battle – against the Tochari – after receiving a wound in the arm, perhaps from a poisoned arrow. It is to his ultimate successor, Mithradates II (124/3–87 B.C.), later surnamed the Great, that credit must be given not only for securing the eastern boundaries of Parthia against the nomad threat, and even indeed enlarging them, but also for stabilizing the Arsacid administration in Babylonia, an area soon to become the very heart of the kingdom.

It was probably owing to the vulnerability of the old Parthian homeland around Nisā and Abīvard to nomad raids by the fiercer tribes from beyond the Oxus that the headquarters of Parthian government gradually shifted westwards during the late 2nd and the whole of the 1st centuries B.C. Whether the official name of Mihrdādkert given to the city of Nisā originated with Mithradates I himself, or derived from some earlier, perhaps even Achaemenian, governor of that name, is perhaps still an open question, owing to the fact that a monogram which can be read as "Mithradātkert" appears on Parthian coins before the accession of Mithradates.[2] That ruler, according to the historical accounts, had frequently resided in the province of Hyrcania. The site of Hecatompylos in Comisene, south of the Alburz range, is called by several classical writers a Parthian capital,[3] and has been located by recent research at Shahr-i Qūmis, near Qūsha, and 32 km to the west of Dāmghān.[4] Further excavation at this site should establish with more precision the date, probably towards the middle of the 2nd century B.C., when this nowadays rather desolate site became a royal headquarters and winter residence. No doubt it was but a temporary stage in the steady progress of the Arsacid kings towards their ultimate capital at Ctesiphon in Babylonia. Yet owing to political vicissitudes of the 1st century B.C., during which Seleucia and Ctesiphon were frequently in the hands of pretenders to the throne, the move may not have become final until the reign of Gotarzes I (91–*c.* 80 B.C.).

[1] Tarn, "Seleucid–Parthian studies", *PBA* XVI (1930) 115–16.

[2] M. T. Abgarians and D. G. Sellwood, "A hoard of early Parthian drachms", *NC* 1971, p. 114.

[3] Pliny, VI. 44: Ipsum vero Parthiae caput Hecatompylos ...

[4] J. Hansman, "Problems of Qūmis", pp. 131–3; Hansman and D. Stronach, "Excavations at Shahr-i Qūmis, 1967", *JRAS* 1970, p. 61.

Indeed, occasional royal visits to Hecatompylos may even have continued until the accession of Orodes II in 58/7 B.C., and his subsequent capture of Seleucia from his brother Mithradates III directed the main aspirations of Parthia towards the west, as we shall see. For a summer residence the higher altitude of Hamadān (Ecbatana) was preferred from at least the time of Mithradates II (*c.* 124 B.C.).[1]

After the victory of Phraates II over Antiochus VII the Parthian governorship of Babylonia, with its great capital of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, had been entrusted to Himerus, whose stern reprisals against the Macedonian element for their recent defection were the cause of bitter complaints. Meanwhile, at the mouth of the Tigris, a new state, that of Characene, was forming under the rule of the local governor Hyspaosines, who was not himself a subject of the Parthian king. Near the present site of Qurna at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates,[2] Alexander the Great had founded a vast city. After damage by floods, it had been restored under the name of Antiochia either by Antiochus III, or perhaps by Antiochus IV. With the lapse of Seleucid government, its satrap Hyspaosines found himself an independent ruler, and powerfully refortified the town, so that it acquired the name of Spasinou Charax, "the fort of Hyspaosines". When attacked by the Parthian governor Himerus,[3] Hyspaosines at first got the upper hand, and is attested by cuneiform tablets to have gained possession of Babylon in 127 B.C. and also, it seems briefly, of Seleucia. The issue of coins by Hyspaosines at his capital commenced in 124/3 B.C., but there is no evidence for his having used the mint at Seleucia.[4] Neither is he credited with mint-activity at Susa, where copper coins attest the constant adherence of the city to its Arsacid overlords. In 122/1 B.C. the newly enthroned Mithradates II arrived in Babylonia to settle accounts with Hyspaosines, whose copper coins he soon overstruck with the Parthian types in Spasinou Charax itself.[5] Thus it appears that he completely overthrew the Characenian, yet nevertheless Hyspaosines returned to his throne, and the state which he founded continued to exist under Parthian suzerainty until the coming of the Sasanians in A.D. 224. Mithradates moreover waged war successfully

[1] Strabo XVI. 1. 16 (C 743): *θέρους δέ ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις καὶ τῇ Ὑρκανίᾳ . . .*

[2] Hansman, "Charax and the Karkheh", *IA* VII (1967), 36 ff.

[3] A. Bellinger, "Hyspaosines of Charax", *YCS* VIII (1942), 57; E. T. Newell, *Mithridates of Parthia and Hyspaosines of Characene* (*ANSNNM* no. 26), New York, 1925.

[4] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 382.

[5] Newell, *Mithridates and Hyspaosines*, p. 8; cf. Le Rider, *Suse*, pp. 387–8.

against Artavasdes I, king of Armenia; and the young Armenian prince Tigranes, taken to Parthia as a hostage on this occasion, was later, of course, to become the most powerful ruler of his line. It was no doubt also under Mithradates II that Parthian rule was re-established over the invading Saka tribes in the new territories which they had overrun in what is today Sīstān (originally Sakastān). Gradually the whole Helmand–Qandahār region, and even the Punjab as far to the east as Taxila, came under the sway of the Indo-Parthian dynasty, who ruled during the 1st century A.D. as allies and equals of the Arsacids in Iran. Though Herzfeld's elaborate reconstruction of the rise to power in this area of the Parthian house of Suren[1] is likely to correspond in very general terms with the true situation, it cannot be insisted upon for points of detail. In particular, his identification of the Vonones of the Indo-Scythian coinage, placed now by current research before 57 B.C.,[2] with Vonones of Parthia (A.D. 8/9–11/12) involves a manifest anachronism.

Perhaps the most significant changes in our understanding of Parthian history as a result of recent investigation relate to the career of the personality now known as Gotarzes I. Two poorly preserved rock-sculptures at Bīsitūn, at the foot of the rock upon which is carved the inscription of Darius, refer to this personage. That on the left, mutilated by a 19th-century Qājār inscription, can be reconstructed with the help of an early drawing by Grelot.[3] It shows four notables standing before a king. The accompanying Greek inscription names the latter as "the Great King Mithradates", that is to say Mithradates II. The four notables are Gotarzes, satrap of satraps, one name illegible, Mithradates entitled in Greek *pepisteumenos* "Privy Councillor", and Kophasates – an early form of the name Kohzādh. In this sculpture it is clear that Gotarzes was one of the highest royal officers during this reign. The sculpture on the right shows a scene of equestrian combat, and above the figure of the protagonist is the name *Gotarses Geopothros* "Gotarzes son of Gēv". Herzfeld, who had no knowledge of an earlier king named Gotarzes, ascribed the second relief to the ruler of that name (mentioned by Tacitus), who occupied the Parthian throne between A.D. 40 and 51.

[1] Herzfeld, "Sakastan", *AMI* IV (1931), 101.

[2] Since Jenkins, "Indo-Scythic mints", *Journ. Num. Soc. India* XVII (1955), 2, places this Vonones well before Azes I in the coin-series, and the Vikrama era of 57 B.C. apparently originated with the commencement of Azes' second reign.

[3] Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, p. 36.

Babylonian tablets which were subsequently brought to notice by Debevoise[1] show that from as early as 91 B.C. a second Arsacid ruler, named Gotarzes, was actually in control of Babylonia. At the same time, the evidence of Josephus shows[2] that the Seleucid king Demetrius III Eucaerus, after a civil war with his brother Philip Epiphanes, was taken prisoner by a Parthian force that intervened on the brother's side, and sent to Mithradates II. Since the latest coins of Demetrius III are dated 88/7 B.C., it therefore appears that Mithradates continued to rule over certain parts of Iran, including apparently Media and Mesopotamia, while Gotarzes occupied Babylonia. Subsequently there is evidence that Gotarzes continued to rule until 81/80 B.C., when the name of a new ruler, Orodes I, begins to appear on the tablets. It is suggested that Orodes I reigned for a short time as rival to Gotarzes, who thereafter disappears from the record, so that Orodes is likely to have continued as sole ruler until about 76 B.C., when there is evidence that the next Arsacid, the elderly Sinatruces, must have been on the throne.

The attempt has recently been made to combine the findings of Debevoise on the Arsacid succession during this complicated period with the evidence of the coins.[3] Later issues of Mithradates II show the royal portrait with long beard and jewelled tiara. The legends on the reverse read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ "[Coin] of Arsaces, Great King of Kings, [divinely] Manifest", or on the final issue ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "[Coin] of Arsaces, King of Kings, the Benefactor, the Just and Philhellenic". These coins are followed by an issue of a new ruler, whose energetic portrait is crowned with a plain diadem and whose inscription reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Arsaces, Great King, son of a deified father, Benefactor, [divinely] Manifest and Philhellenic".

As in the case of the great majority of Arsacid coin-legends and inscriptions, as we have already noted, the king is designated merely by the throne-name Arsaces, and the personal name does not appear, so that difficulties arise over his identification. Wroth, editor of the British Museum catalogue,[4] attributed these diademed issues to a problematical "Artabanus II", in this following a speculative suggestion

[1] Debevoise, p. 48. [2] *Antiquities* XIII, 384–6.
[3] Sellwood, "The Parthian coins of Gotarzes I, Orodes I, and Sinatruces", *NC* 1962, p. 75. [4] Wroth, *BMC Parthia*.

of von Gutschmid.[1] Some of these coins with the diadem bear in addition to the usual legends the names of Iranian provinces, such as Traxianē, Margianē, Areia and also Katastrateian. The last term echoes a phrase in a Seleucid inscription of Anatolia,[2] *τὸ κάτα στρατεῖαν γαζοφυλάκιον* "the expeditionary treasury", and seems to refer to an itinerant mint and treasury organized to accompany the royal army on its campaigns. Recently a further legend of the same type, ΕΝ ΡΑΓΑΙϹ "in Ray" has been reported.[3] As early as 1930 Tarn rejected the attribution of these so-called "campaign coins" to the hypothetical Artabanus II,[4] and ascribed them instead, with considerable insight, to an unknown "joint-king" and general of Mithradates whom he regarded as having been entrusted with campaigns against the Sacae in eastern Iran. The weakness of Tarn's attribution lay in the fact that besides the campaign issues, coins of identical types without the special legends occur in the general Parthian series, and similar tetradrachms are reasonably plentiful. Since numismatists in general accept that (with isolated exceptions) tetradrachms of the Parthian kings were minted only at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, it follows from this that the mysterious "king of the campaign coins" not merely was a general entrusted with eastern campaigns, but ruled for a time over the entire kingdom, and even had control of Babylonia.

Sellwood therefore has combined the discovery of Debevoise, that a king named Gotarzes ruled the Parthian empire between 91 B.C. and 81/80 B.C. with the evidence of the "campaign coins", and so attributes these, and the similar issues with diademed portrait, to Gotarzes. Not only will the latter then have established himself in Babylonia in competition with Mithradates II, but the coins would then also show that he conducted an ambitious campaign into the east of Iran, and reached not only Ray, but even distant Marv and Herāt, besides the little-known Traxianē. The hypothesis of Sellwood is certainly an attractive one, and suggests that the historical role of the first Gotarzes may have been more considerable than was previously realized.[5] Plainly an earlier stage of this ruler's career was as Satrap of Satraps on the left-hand rock-relief at Bīsitūn. The possibility may be

[1] Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, p. 81; criticized by Tarn, "Seleucid–Parthian studies", p. 119.

[2] C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence of the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven, Conn., 1934), p. 98.

[3] Sellwood, "Parthian coins", p. 78.

[4] Tarn, "Seleucid–Parthian studies", p. 119.

[5] [The author notes that since this chapter was written Sellwood has developed a new theory and now maintains that the King with a diademed portrait is later. See chapter 8(a), pp. 285 ff. for details. Ed.]

considered that the right-hand relief at that site refers also to him, and not to the later Gotarzes II, as Herzfeld supposed. At this point it is true that a problem arises, for the protagonist of the right-hand relief is labelled in Greek Geopothros "Son of Gēv", whereas on the coins attributed by Sellwood to Gotarzes I the king is entitled ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ "Son of a deified father", which implies that his father was a ruling Arsacid king. There could have been, however, no Arsacid king called Gēv.

On the other hand, that section of the *Shāh-nāma* which covers the reign of the legendary Kai Kāvūs narrates substantial episodes concerning a certain Godarz[1] who has a famous *son* by the name of Gēv, and whose saga no doubt represents an episode from the Parthian period.[2] Previously it was usual to identify the Godarz of the *Shāh-nāma* with the Parthian Gotarzes II (A.D. 43/4–50/1). However, the enlarged role which Sellwood's identifications suggest for the first Gotarzes might justify the transfer of the whole saga to the latter. It must be observed that Le Rider expressed reservations on Sellwood's transfer of the "campaign coins" to Gotarzes I.[3] The following group, which portrays a ruler with a short beard and jewelled tiara, and of which the legend contains the Greek word ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ, Le Rider prefers to attribute to a later ruler, Sinatruces (77 to 71 or 70 B.C.), rather than Orodes I (*c.* 80 B.C.) with Sellwood. His reason is that it seems at Susa to contain eight or nine annual issues, while Orodes I would not have reigned so long. On this hypothesis, Le Rider cannot name "the king of the campaign coins", whom he is content to call Arsaces Theopator Euergetes. His objections to Sellwood's reconstruction still do not seem, in the present fragmentary state of the evidence, to be wholly decisive.

Whether or not Orodes I is to be credited with coins, and whatever the duration of his reign, Orodes I is briefly attested at Babylon by cuneiform tablets. After this reign, dynastic struggles in the Parthian empire were resolved by the return of the eighty-year-old prince Sinatruces[4] from exile among the Sacaraucae on the eastern frontier. Despite his age, Sinatruces reigned for a further seven years. But when, in 72/1 B.C. Mithradates of Pontus requested his help in his war against the Romans, the aged king was in no position to assist. He died in

[1] J. C. Coyajee, "The House of Gotarzes: a chapter of Parthian history in the Shahname", *JRASB* XXVIII (1932), 207–24.
[2] Cf. ch. 10(*a*), pp. 485 ff.
[3] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 392.
[4] Lucian, *Macrobioi*, 15.

71 or 70 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Phraates III. To Sinatruces, Sellwood attributes the drachmae with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ. The portrait wears a long beard, and a tiara decorated with a straight bull's horn, and a line of stags' heads along its ridge. No monogram appears upon this issue, and since it includes no tetradrachms, the implication seems to be, on this hypothesis, that Sinatruces may not have controlled, or resided in, Seleucia.[1]

There is literary evidence that the succeeding ruler, Phraates III, used the title ΘΕΟΣ "the God", as of course had several Hellenistic kings before him.[2] The numismatic authorities are therefore unanimous in ascribing to Phraates the tetradrachms upon which the king wears the tiara decorated with a curved bull's horn, and which bear the Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ–together with corresponding drachms which omit the word ΘΕΟΥ, and a further series with the same legends upon which the king wears the diadem alone. However, the series mentioned in the previous paragraph, upon which the key titles are ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ, and which as we have seen are ascribed by Sellwood to Sinatruces, were regarded by Newell,[3] and following him Le Rider, as the first of the issues of Phraates III. The correlation of the Parthian coinage after Mithradates II with the succession of historical rulers thus constitutes a problem of some complexity, to be examined in more detail in chapter 8(a).

It was, however, during the reign of Phraates III (*c.* 70–58/7 B.C.) that the expanding Roman power in Anatolia first impinged upon Parthia, and Parthian history comes clearly into the purview of the Roman historians. The Roman general Lucullus had defeated Mithradates of Pontus and occupied his kingdom, driving Mithradates to take refuge with his son-in-law, Tigranes the Great of Armenia. Lucullus therefore advanced across the highlands of Anatolia, crossing both the Euphrates and the Tigris, and laid siege to Tigranes' new capital, Tigranocerta, in 69 B.C.[4] There is a conflict among the Greek and Roman historians as to the location of Tigranocerta, traditionally represented as the point of contact between the Armenian kingdom,

[1] Sellwood, "Parthian coins", p. 82.

[2] Phlegon of Tralles, fr. 12. 7 (= Jacoby FGrHist IIB, 1164); Appian *Mith.* 104; Dio Cassius XXXVI, 4. Cf. Wroth, *BMC Parthia* XXXIV; Debevoise, p. 70.

[3] "The coinage of the Parthians", in *SPA* I, 481; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 396.

[4] Pauly, *s.v.* Tigranocerta; M. Lehman-Haupt, *Armenien einst und jetzt*, I, 383–6; 395–406.

and the later Parthian frontier-station at Nisibis. On the one hand, Plutarch and also Pliny[1] appear to describe Tigranocerta as situated north of the Tigris and east of Diyārbakr, a location which seems also to be supported by the *Peutinger Table*. On the evidence of those writers substantial authorities place the city at the medieval site of Miyāfārqīn, the modern Silvan. On the other hand, in the context of the later wars of Corbulo, Tacitus (who explicitly links the city with the River Nicephorius) gives the distance from Tigranocerta to Nisibis as exactly thirty-seven miles,[2] which suggests a site in the vicinity of Mārdīn, and an identification of the Nicephorius with the Zergan, a tributary of the Khabur (and ultimately the Euphrates) which passes nearby.[3] If the latter location should prove correct, and the site so near to the Parthian border, a close interest of the Parthian government in events at Tigranocerta is easy to understand.

During the march of Lucullus to Tigranocerta, his opponents Mithradates and Tigranes had written to Phraates III seeking assistance. After his victory, Lucullus had entered into correspondence with the Parthian king to dissuade him from intervening. The Parthian replied amicably to both parties, but remained neutral. Lucullus even contemplated himself launching an expedition against Parthia, but the disaffection of his troops, exhausted after their long campaigns, led him to abandon the scheme. When in 66 B.C. Pompey was sent to supersede Lucullus in command of the Roman armies, he reversed a number of his predecessor's decisions, but secured an agreement with Phraates to maintain Parthian neutrality as before. Soon afterwards Tigranes the Younger rebelled against his father, and sought refuge with Phraates, whom he persuaded to invade the territory still held by his father around his capital of Artaxata, the modern Artashat on the Araxes River near Erevan, a place of course far to the north of the Roman military operations in Lesser Armenia. Phraates laid siege to Artaxata, but when he left the younger Tigranes to conduct operations, the father made a sortie and defeated his son, who fled to Pompey,

[1] Plutarch, *Lucullus* 24; Pliny, *Natural History* VI. 9. 26, places the site "*in excelso*" "on a height", and describes its river, the Nicephorius, as a tributary of the Tigris (VI. 31. 129).

[2] *Annals* XV. 5. 2: apud oppidum Nisibin, septem et triginta milibus passuum a Tigranocerta distantem . . .

[3] As argued by E. Sachau, "Über die Lage von Tigranokerta", *APAW* 1880. 2 (1881); cf. L. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale* (Paris, 1962), pp. 252–67. The fullest discussion of the problem of Tigranocerta is no doubt that of Bernard W. Henderson, "Controversies in Armenian topography: 1, The site of Tigranocerta", *American Journal of Philology* XXVIII (Baltimore, 1903), 99–121. He places Tigranocerta at Tel Armen near Mārdīn, apparently also the site of the Islamic city of Dunaisir.

and offered his services as a guide for the Roman army that was already advancing on Artaxata. However, when Pompey arrived, the elder Tigranes submitted and was restored to his throne, while the son, who refused to acquiesce in a partition of the Armenian kingdom, was put in chains for eventual exhibition at the Roman's triumph. After thus settling matters, Pompey advanced into the Caucasus in pursuit of Mithradates of Pontus. None the less, Phraates sent to demand the return of his young protégé, who was his son-in-law; and proposed that the Euphrates be fixed as the boundary between Parthia and Rome. When Pompey retorted that the young Tigranes was closer kin to his father than to his father-in-law (and so would remain), and that the boundary would be fixed where justice directed, Phraates established his base at Arbela and, taking advantage of Pompey's absence in the north, overran the district of Gordyene on the Tigris below Diyārbakr. He was ultimately dislodged by the legate Afranius, but whether by force or negotiation is left uncertain.[1]

After this settlement, Pompey returned across Asia Minor to Syria. But apart from a frontier dispute between Phraates and Tigranes the Great, in which the adjudication of the Romans was requested, the situation in Armenia remained quiet. It is necessary, however, to consider at this point a further numismatic problem which has a bearing on historical events during the reign of Phraates III. There are two groups of coins belonging to this general period which are often attributed to an "Unknown King".[2] The first of these groups, consisting of drachms, is unusual because it portrays on the obverse a diademed royal bust shown full face, and the critical words of the legend are once more ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ, as in the case of the presumed Gotarzes. The second of the groups shows the diademed head in profile, and the key words of the legend are now ΦΙΛΟ-ΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ. It is tempting, in view of the similarities, to ascribe these groups to Gotarzes, and this case has indeed been argued.[3] It seems, however, to be invalidated by the fact that while the drachmae ascribed to Gotarzes bear no monograms, those under discussion here bear monograms similar to others which occur regularly on the Parthian

[1] As noted by Debevoise, p. 75, it is asserted by Dio Cassius XXXVII, 5, that Afranius reoccupied the district without fighting; on the other hand, Plutarch, *Pompey* 36, claims that Afranius drove out the Parthian king, and pursued him to Arbela.

[2] In particular by Wroth, *BMC Parthia*, p. 56.

[3] A. Simonetta, "Notes on the Parthian etc. issues of the first century B.C.", *Congrès Internationale de numismatique*, Paris, 1953, II (1957), 116–19.

drachma coinage from Phraates III onwards. From this fact it can reasonably be deduced that the ruler of the frontal portrait is in any case no earlier than an immediate predecessor of Phraates III, and that he could be later.[1] Sellwood, however, has recently deduced from the development of the monograms on these and subsequent issues that the ruler of these coins should have been a contemporary of Phraates III.[2] Consequently he is led to reassert Wroth's attribution to an "Unknown King" active before 58 B.C., and suggests that this could only be an obscure personage, Darius of Media, mentioned by Appian in connection with the campaign of Pompey against Mithradates of Pontus.[3] On this hypothesis it has therefore to be accepted that Darius of Media attained sufficient importance to issue a copious coinage, and apparently to contest the throne with so well-established a ruler as Phraates III. An alternative view, argued by Le Rider on the evidence of bronze issues from Susa[4] would ascribe to Orodes II, one of the successors of Phraates III, the issues with Philopator; and, while reserving judgment about the issue with frontal portrait and the legend Theopator, inclines to see this also as an issue either of Orodes II or of his brother and rival Mithradates III.

3
THE CAMPAIGN OF CARRHAE

Whether or not, therefore, the existence of an "Unknown King", perhaps identical with Darius of Media, be admitted as the contemporary and rival of Phraates III, it is to the end of the latter's reign that we have now to turn. According to the explicit statement of the Greek historian Dio Cassius,[5] "Phraates was assassinated by his sons; Orodes succeeded to the kingdom and expelled Mithradates his brother from the province of Media which he governed. The latter fled to Gabinius, and tried to persuade him to assist in effecting his return." The date of this episode is placed in the year 58/7 B.C. If the expulsion of Mithradates followed quickly on the death of the old king as this passage suggests, it is hardly possible that Mithradates III could have been responsible for the copious coinage with the facing bust, and

[1] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 393. He may press the evidence too far, on p. 402, by asserting that the monograms necessitate the placing of these coins *after* those of Phraates III, since, as Sellwood has shown, they could equally well be contemporary.

[2] Sellwood, "Wroth's unknown Parthian king", *NC* 1965, p. 126. [See also ch. 8(*a*), pp. 287ff., below.]

[3] Appian, *Mithradatic Wars* XII, 106, quoted by Sellwood.

[4] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 402.

[5] XXXIX. 56. 2.

bearing the monograms which are currently attributed to the Median mints of Ecbatana (Hamadān) and Rhagae (Ray).[1] To this extent, Sellwood's hypothesis of an earlier pretender active in the same general area seems to find justification, and may even give rise to a suspicion that it was on this pretender rather than on his own sons, whose coins of the drachma denomination bear the dutiful epithets Eupator ("Son of a noble father") and Philopator ("Lover of his father") respectively, that the death of Phraates should be blamed. Be that as it may, Gabinius, Roman proconsul of Syria since the beginning of the year 57 B.C., at first gave his assistance to the exiled Mithradates, and led a force across the Euphrates in his support. However, another request for help from the exiled Egyptian king Ptolemy XI Auletes diverted the attention of the Roman general, and Mithradates was left to essay the reconquest of the kingdom with whatever forces he could collect. Nothing daunted, in 55 B.C. the exiled prince did succeed in gaining control of Babylonia, and occupying and fortifying the city of Seleucia. He was able to strike a coinage of the tetradrachm denomination (peculiar as we have seen to the mint of Seleucia) and, exceptionally, inscribed with his personal name.[2] But the city was besieged and ultimately taken, towards the end of the year 54 B.C., by Surenas, the general of Orodes II, and the coins of Mithradates were overstruck before he had managed to put them into circulation. When the rebel prince surrendered to his brother, he was executed upon the spot.[3]

It is in the light of this dynastic struggle, uncertain though some of its details may be, that what is without doubt the most celebrated episode of Parthian history, the destruction of the Roman army under Crassus at the battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C., has therefore to be viewed. The interval between the capture of Seleucia by Surenas and the battle itself is now estimated at little more than a matter of weeks.[4] Plutarch's account of the motives of Crassus' expedition, coloured as it was bound to be by the advantages of hindsight, acquires a more intelligible context when its synchronism with events in Parthia is clearly seen. Crassus had left Rome to assume his command in Syria in November 55 B.C., and at that time the attempt of Mithradates III upon Babylonia was meeting with some success. The projected Roman expedition was

[1] Sellwood, "Wroth's unknown Parthian king", p. 126.

[2] H. Dressel, "Ein Tetradrachmon des Arsakiden Mithradates III", *ZN* XXXIII (1922), 156–77 and pl. VI; cf. Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 399.

[3] Justin XLII. 4, 1: . . . in conspectu suo trucidari jussit.

[4] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 404.

not to be an unsupported incursion into unknown and hostile territory or, as Parthians and later even Romans were to represent it, as a wanton aggression against an inoffensive ally. It would rather have been seen by Crassus and his party as a judicious move in support of a legitimate candidate for the throne; its aim, to relieve the gallant Mithradates, besieged in Seleucia, and to assist a Roman sympathizer on to the Parthian throne. Thus at this stage the Roman enterprise was by no means so rash as later developments were to make it appear. The historical narratives understandably put Crassus in the least favourable light. His preoccupation with financial considerations, acquisitiveness and ambition were no doubt notorious, and of course he was lacking in first-class military experience, particularly of the novel cavalry weapons of the Parthians, and the conditions of steppe warfare. On the other hand, as a prince of Roman industry and finance, he was by no means devoid of ruthlessness and astuteness. His previous career showed his capacity for handling a dangerous enterprise. As long as Mithradates continued to hold out at Seleucia, there might have been no question of a pitched battle. The Roman expedition might have required nothing more than a show of force.

In such circumstances, Plutarch is likely to have been right to blame Crassus for his dilatoriness in spending the late summer of 54 B.C. in occupying and garrisoning the cities of Mesopotamia, and thereafter returning to spend the winter in Syria. The historian stresses that he ought to have gone forward, and strengthened himself with the accession of Babylon and Seleucia, "cities constantly at enmity with the Parthians" – an observation that manifestly implies that Mithradates was still keeping up the fight.[1] Again, when the emissaries of Orodes reproached him for his aggression, the retort of Crassus that he would give his reply in Seleucia could well have reflected his expectation that he would find a favourable situation there. The sources quote the reply of the eldest Parthian ambassador, who held out his palm and said, "Hair will grow here before you see Seleucia."

In contrast with the doomed and pitiful figure of Crassus, the sketch which survives of the Parthian general Surenas is a vivid and spirited one. The name under which he appears in the classical sources was apparently no more than his hereditary title, that of *sūrēn*, which continues to appear in the record of Iranian history far into Sasanian

[1] Plutarch, *Crassus* XVI. 8: *ὅτι πρόσω χωρεῖν δέον ἐχεσθαί τε Βαβυλῶνος καὶ Σελευκείας, δυσμενῶν ἀεὶ Πάρθοις πολέων...*

times. By one of those tantalizing gaps in the historical record, his *personal* name is still unknown to us. In all likelihood it is preserved amongst the throng of epic heroes whose deeds are recalled in the Kayānian section of the *Shāh-nāma*. For though, in the national epic, the record of the Arsacids was suppressed at their true chronological point, the instance of Gotarzes has shown that some at least of its spectacular episodes were transferred to the legendary period of Kai Kāvūs, and incorporated there. The feat of arms performed by Surenas was certainly the most celebrated of the whole Arsacid era, and could not easily have vanished entirely. Thus in some ways the position of Surenas in the historical tradition is curiously parallel to that of Rustam in the epic. The latter was always represented as the mightiest of Iranian paladins, and the atmosphere of the episodes in which he features is strongly reminiscent of the Arsacid period. Yet despite the predominance of Rustam in the epic tradition, it has never been possible to find him a convincingly historical niche. Herzfeld, it is true, has developed the very valid theme of Rustam's eastern Iranian and Saka associations, and drawn a comparison with Gondophares, the later Indo-Parthian conqueror of Taxila.[1] Yet the very fragmentary record does not suggest that the careers of Rustam and of Gondophares were closely parallel, even though both were possibly members of the house of Suren.

Despite possible discrepancies between what is known of their careers, it is likely that the Surenas of Carrhae provides a closer historical analogy with the legend of Rustam. The possibility of an identification can only be tested when progress of archaeological research on Arsacid sites provides direct evidence from Iranian sources on this greatest of Arsacid triumphs, so far known only from the Greek and Roman tradition; and eventually reveals the personal name of Plutarch's Surenas. As to his prowess, the narrative speaks for itself:[2]

For Surenas was no ordinary person; but in fortune, family and honour the first after the king; and in point of courage and capacity, as well as size and beauty, superior to the Parthians of his time. If he went only on an excursion into the country, he had a thousand camels to carry his baggage, and two hundred carriages for his concubines. He was attended by a thousand heavy-armed horse, and many more of the light-armed rode before him. Indeed his vassals and slaves made up a body of cavalry little less than

[1] Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935), p. 66: "On the one hand therefore, he is the historical prototype of Rustam, hero of the *Shāh-nāma*; on the other hand, that of the leader of the Three Magi: Kaspar."

[2] Plutarch, *Crassus* 21.6.

ten thousand. He had the hereditary privilege in his family of putting the diadem upon the king's head, when he was crowned. When Orodes was driven from the throne, he restored him; and it was he who conquered for him the great city of Seleucia, being the first to scale the wall, and beating off the enemy with his own hand. Though he was not then thirty years old, his discernment was strong, and his counsel esteemed the best.

Such then were the protagonists in the decisive battle that was about to develop. With regard to the strength of the two armies, that of the Romans was greatly superior in sheer numbers, but ill adapted to the open terrain. According to the most reliable account, that of Plutarch,[1] Crassus commanded a force of seven legions, of which the total effective strength was estimated by Tarn at twenty-eight thousand heavy infantrymen.[2] Other commentators have given somewhat higher estimates. In addition, the Roman force included four thousand cavalry, a quarter of whom were Gaulish troops lent by Julius Caesar; and a similar number of light-armed infantry. At the minimum estimate, the army of Crassus would thus have numbered thirty-six thousand men.[3] The Parthian force by which they were opposed consisted, as the account shows, of a thousand fully armoured lancers, the cataphracti, who formed the bodyguard of the Suren. Nine thousand horse-archers formed the main body, and the baggage-train of a thousand camels was available to bring up extra stocks of arrows. The entire force was mounted, and highly mobile under desert conditions. At a superficial reckoning, the Roman force may have seemed sufficient for the task in hand. The event showed, however, that in two critical respects the Romans had underestimated the Parthian horse-archers. The power of their arrows to penetrate the legionary armour had not been appreciated, perhaps because the Roman commanders were unaware that the compound bow which the Parthians employed[4] was a more powerful weapon than the lighter bows found at that time in Europe. Again, the Romans had anticipated that the Parthian cavalry would quickly exhaust their stock of arrows; but the camel train of the Suren made it possible for him to bring up stocks of arrows as the quivers of his men were emptied. But for these two miscalculations, the Roman legionary square might have been expected to hold its own against the Parthian cavalry. Yet the heat, and vast distances of the Mesopo-

[1] *Crassus* 20. [2] *CAH* IX, p. 608.
[3] Debevoise, p. 83, gives the slightly higher estimate of 42,000.
[4] F. E. Brown, "A recently discovered compound bow", *Seminarium Kondakovianum* IX (1937), 1–10.

tamian plain (for the battle took place in June) would have put even the stoutest infantry at a disadvantage. Moreover, the Roman means of retaliation against their adversaries were ineffective, since the range of the Roman javelin was obviously limited, and the Gaulish cavalry relied on for a counter-attack were provided only with short javelins, and were lacking in defensive armour.

Before his march began, Crassus had been advised by Artavasdes, king of Armenia, a Roman ally, to lead his forces through the mountains of that country, for the sake of shelter from the Parthian cavalry. However, he declined this advice, being anxious to incorporate the substantial Roman garrison posted during the previous season in the towns of Mesopotamia. And again, after crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma, he rejected the plan of his legate Cassius, that he should follow the course of the river to Babylonia. Instead Crassus followed the guidance of an Arab chief, whose name is given by Plutarch improbably as Ariamnes, but whom other sources name as Acbar or Abgar, and whom commentators have identified as the king of the city of Edessa. This guide, suspected by the historians of collusion with the Suren, led the Romans away from the river into the desert, to the direct proximity of the main Parthian force, and, when the battle was imminent, made a pretext to ride away.

At first the Romans prepared to advance to the encounter in extended line. Then Crassus formed the legions into a square, and so advanced to ford the River Balissus (Balīkh). Contrary to the opinion of his officers, he decided not to camp by the water, but hurried the troops across, and before long came in sight of the advance-guard of the Parthians. The strength of their main body was at first concealed. Then the thunder of drums burst on the ears of the Romans. The mailed cavalry of the Suren's bodyguard uncovered their armour, and the sun glittered on their helmets of "Margian" steel – an expression which no doubt testifies that the cataphracts were Saka tribesmen recruited on the eastern frontier of the Parthian kingdom. The first attack was a charge by the lancers of the bodyguard, led in person by the towering figure of the Suren. Then, seeing the steadiness of the Roman legionaries, whose main advantage lay in hand-to-hand fighting, the cataphracts drew back, and the horse-archers began their work. What followed was more like a massacre than a battle. As often, the Romans had tried to remedy their weakness in cavalry by using light infantry mixed with their Gaulish horsemen. But such makeshift

tactics were of little avail against the finest cavalry in Asia. The legionaries were soon hard pressed and all but surrounded, so that Crassus was reduced to ordering his son, Publius, who commanded one of the wings, to attempt a charge with his force, and so perhaps create a diversion.

The force which the young Crassus led into the attack consisted of thirteen hundred horse, five hundred archers, and eight cohorts of the infantry, the latter totalling some four thousand men. At first the Parthians retired in front of them; but when they were separated from the main force they were quickly surrounded, offering an all but helpless mark to the rain of arrows. The threat of a charge by the cataphracts forced the Romans into close order, and thereby reduced their chances of escape. Though the Gauls caught hold of the Parthian lances to pull down the riders, and ran under the horses of their enemies to stab them in the belly, these were no more than tactics of desperation. Soon the young Crassus was disabled, and the remnant of his force retired to a mound to make their last stand. The young commander ordered his armour-bearer to end his life, and only five hundred of his soldiers survived to be taken prisoner.

This agonizing diversion had temporarily relieved pressure on the main Roman force. But the magnitude of their disaster became clear when the Parthians rode back with the head of Publius Crassus on a spear. Thereafter the main body had to defend themselves as best they could for the rest of the day under the constant hail of missiles. Only when it grew too dark to shoot did the Parthians draw off, leaving the Romans to pass a melancholy night, encumbered as they were with wounded, and anticipating their final destruction on the following morning. By this time the elder Crassus was prostrated with despair. But Octavius and Cassius, his lieutenants, resolved that their only hope was to escape under cover of darkness, and seek shelter behind the walls of the city of Carrhae. Thus they slipped away silently from their camp in the darkness; but those of the wounded who could be moved obstructed their march, and the majority, who had to be abandoned, raised the alarm with their cries. Understandably, retreating in the dark, the Roman column fell into disorder. But a party of cavalry reached the city at midnight, and warned Coponius, commander of the garrison there, merely that Crassus had fought a great battle with the Parthians, before turning west to make their escape across the Euphrates. Another detachment of two thousand under the Roman

officer Varguntius lost their way in the dark, and were found by the Parthians in the morning established on a hill. Of these, only twenty made their escape. But at Carrhae, Coponius suspected a mishap, and called his men to arms. Then he marched out, and conducted Crassus and the main body into the city.

There were no supplies in Carrhae for standing a long siege, nor hope of relief from the outside, since Crassus had concentrated for his army all the forces in the Roman East. The Roman commander therefore determined to break out on the second night, and make his way to safety in the shelter of the Armenian hills. Once again, his guide, Andromachus, was a Parthian sympathizer, who indeed was later rewarded after the expulsion of the Romans with the governorship of the city. It is said that he misled the Roman column in the dark, so that by dawn the main body was over a mile from the shelter of the hills. The quaestor Cassius, with five hundred horsemen, suspecting a subterfuge, turned back to Carrhae and later escaped by a different route to Syria. Octavius, another of the Roman officers, had reliable guides and gained the shelter of the mountains. At daybreak, Crassus and his force had occupied a spur connected by a low ridge to the main mountain range. When they came under attack, Octavius and his men moved down from the heights to their support. At this moment the Suren rode forward to offer a parley over terms of peace. It is not clear whether Crassus accepted voluntarily, or under pressure from his men. But he and Octavius, with a small group, went down to meet the Parthians, who mounted Crassus upon a horse, to take him away for the signing of the treaty. Octavius, suspecting foul play, seized the bridle of the horse, and, when a scuffle broke out, drew his sword. In the mêlée that followed, all the Romans in the party were slain; and their leaderless troops either surrendered or scattered, though very few were successful in making good their escape. Of the entire force, twenty thousand are said to have been killed; ten thousand were captured, and deported to distant Margiana. Thus ended the disastrous Roman campaign of Carrhae.

The upshot of the débâcle was to win unquestioned recognition for Parthia as a world power equal, if not superior, to Rome. The Euphrates was firmly established as the boundary between the two. At the same time, while the army of the Suren had been sent forward to oppose the Romans in Mesopotamia, the main Parthian force, including the bulk of their infantry, had been led by the king Orodes into Armenia, to

lever the Armenian king Artavasdes away from the Roman alliance. In this enterprise, Orodes was successful. He was able to bring the Armenian monarch to terms, and an alliance was sealed by the arrangement of a marriage between his son Pacorus and the sister of that king. Thus was confirmed the long and close connection between the Arsacid dynasty and the kingdom of Armenia, which remained the last stronghold of the Arsacids even after the rise of the Sasanians in Iran. While the two courts, all connoisseurs of Greek literature, were diverting themselves by watching a performance of the *Bacchae* of Euripides, the commander Silaces brought in the news of the victory, and laid the head of Crassus at Orodes' feet. The gruesome trophy was taken up by the producer of the play, who took it on to the stage and exhibited it to the company in place of the head of Pentheus, which is carried by the heroine in the tragedy.

The Roman east was now devoid of troops, and the way open for Parthian raiding parties to penetrate into Syria. At the same time, Parthian influence began to grow among the Jews of Judaea, who had long maintained links with their co-religionists in Babylonia under Parthian rule; and who now saw in the rising power of Parthia a possible counterpoise to Roman domination. An anti-Roman party took shape under Aristobulus, but their attempt to revolt was soon suppressed by the Roman governor Cassius, who marched hastily down from Syria. In the following year, 51 B.C., a more substantial Parthian force under the young prince Pacorus, supported by the veteran general Osaces, made their way across the Euphrates, and began to raid the suburbs and villas of Antioch. They were caught by Cassius in an ambush near Antigonea, in which Osaces was mortally wounded. After this the Parthians withdrew into northern Syria, and attempted no invasion of Roman territory in the following summer. In the Roman civil war which followed between Pompey and Caesar, the Parthians made no move, but maintained relations with the former. After his defeat and death, a force under Pacorus came to the aid of the Pompeian general Q. Caecilius Bassus, who was besieged at Apamea in the Orontes valley by the Caesarian forces. They were successful in raising the siege, but did not remain.

Caesar made elaborate plans after his supremacy was established for a campaign against Parthia. Troops were drafted to the East, and the route chosen for the expedition was by way of Lesser Armenia. However, Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C. averted the war, and the outbreak

of the Roman civil war found Parthian cavalry on the side of the republicans in their defeat at the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.).

Quintus Labienus, an officer of Brutus and Cassius, had been sent to Parthia for reinforcements, to aid the republican cause. When after the defeat he learned that republican supporters had been condemned under the proscriptions, he joined the Parthians; and in 40 B.C. a Parthian army, under the command of the Parthian prince Pacorus and of Labienus, invaded Syria. Apamea was quickly taken, and there the invading force divided. Labienus turned north to penetrate far into Asia Minor. At the same time Pacorus, who had already gained a high reputation in the Near East both for his military talent and for justice and moderation, turned south along the coast through Syria, while his general Barzapharnes led another force further inland. All the cities of the coast, as far to the southward as Ptolemais (Acre), admitted the Parthians, with the single exception of Tyre. In Judaea the leader of the pro-Parthian party was Antigonus, nephew of the High Priest Hyrcanus. The latter was in turn under the control of two Roman supporters, the Idumaeans Phasael and Herod. Antigonus sent a large subsidy to the Parthian prince, in return for military help to gain control of the province. The combined Jewish and Parthian force defeated their opponents and advanced on Jerusalem. When Hyrcanus and Phasael were persuaded to go down and negotiate with Barzapharnes they were taken into custody. Herod, hearing of their arrest, fled to his impregnable stronghold of Masada near the Dead Sea. Thus Antigonus was installed as king of Judaea, while the two prisoners were carried away to Parthia. For a moment, the whole of the Roman East seemed to be either in Parthian hands, or on the point of capture. Yet though connections between the Jews of Judaea and the Parthian empire, more especially through the Jews of Babylonia, were long to remain an important political factor, the conclusion of the second Roman civil war was soon to bring about a revival of Roman strength in Asia.

Antony, at that time the most powerful of the Roman generals, had already sent Publius Ventidius into Anatolia to oppose Labienus. Soon Labienus was driven back into Syria, and though his Parthian allies came to his support, they were caught at a disadvantage in the hill country by Ventidius and heavily defeated. When Labienus tried to escape his men were ambushed and himself taken prisoner soon afterwards and put to death. At the Amanus Gates between Cilicia and

Syria, the Parthian officer Pharnapates, after a fierce fight, was defeated and slain with most of his men. Late in 39 B.C., the Parthian crown prince Pacorus withdrew from Syria, and Ventidius was occupied in trying to reduce the cities that still remained pro-Parthian, but though he approached Jerusalem, did not attack it.

In the following spring, 38 B.C., Pacorus reassembled his forces and once more invaded Syria. The legions of Ventidius were still in winter quarters in Cappadocia, but the Roman general circulated misleading rumours about his plans, and thus delayed the Parthian advance. Finally the two armies met near Gindarus, to the north-east of Antioch. The Roman camp was situated on high ground, but the Parthians, believing the Roman forces to be weak, attempted to rush the camp. They were repelled with heavy losses, and though the Greek and Roman historians differ as to the exact course of the battle, Pacorus with his bodyguard was trapped and killed, and the remaining Parthians were dispersed, and driven back across the Euphrates. Pacorus had been a prince of outstanding merit and reputation. As successor-designate to the Parthian throne, he had even been permitted to make sparse issues of coins bearing his youthful portrait.[1] His death was not only a bitter blow to his father Orodes; by throwing open once more the question of the Parthian succession, it introduced a new source of dissension into the affairs of the kingdom. Orodes selected next as his heir Phraates (IV), who assumed effective power in 39/8 B.C. Soon afterwards, the aged king died, according to the historian Dio Cassius[2] of grief at his favourite son's death, or of old age. Plutarch[3] prefers a lurid tale ascribing to Phraates IV the murder of his father. The new king was, at any rate, obliged to secure his succession—by putting to death his brothers and driving into exile numbers of their supporters and other opponents of his rule. One of these, Monaeses, who had gained a military reputation during the recent war, took refuge with Antony in Syria, and encouraged him to undertake a campaign against Parthia. Meanwhile, Antony had reconquered Jerusalem, and executed the Parthian nominee Antigonus, so that Herod now ascended the throne of Judaea.

MARK ANTONY IN ĀZARBĀĪJĀN

The force with which the Roman triumvir planned the invasion of Parthia is variously estimated at between sixteen and thirteen legions, or more than double the ill-fated force of Crassus. If the larger figure be

[1] Wroth, *BMC Parthia*, p. 97. [2] XLIX, 23. [3] *Crassus* 33.

accepted, the total numbers would have amounted to sixty thousand Roman legionaries, with ten thousand Iberian and Celtic cavalry, and thirty thousand Asiatic allies, an enormous force for this period. The Roman army marched up the Euphrates to Carana, plausibly identified with Karīn-katak, the modern Erzerum. Here Artavasdes, king of Armenia, joined the Romans with a force of six thousand armoured cavalry, and seven thousand foot. The most substantial description of the campaign is that in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, but the account of Dio Cassius[1] adds some colourful details, and several points in the brief versions of Velleius Paterculus[2] and Florus,[3] deriving probably from the lost book CXXX of Livy, provide critical control of the narrative. The principal source for all these versions was probably the account of Quintus Dellius, a Roman officer who took part in the expedition, and whose descriptions of the terrain are also mentioned by Strabo.[4]

Antony, "leaving Armenia on his left" (that is to say, passing south of the region of its capital Artaxata, which lay north of the Araxes), struck into Atropatene. His route was in all probability that of the plain which leads from Khūy to Marand. Since the siege-train, containing the eighty-foot ram on which he depended to reduce the walled cities, could not keep pace, he left it to follow under the escort of Oppius Statianus with two legions. The main body pressed on rapidly towards the capital city of Atropatene, named Phraata or Praaspa,[5] where the wives and children of Artavasdes, the local king, resided, and which was strongly fortified and garrisoned. Shortly we shall return to the geographical problems of the campaign, and the identification of its principal city.

Meanwhile, the main Parthian force appeared under the personal command of the king Phraates, and descending on the slowly moving siege-train, wiped out its escort and destroyed the engines. By the time Antony had come to the rescue with reinforcements, only the shocking sight of ten thousand corpses remained. This initial reverse gravely prejudiced the Roman plan. On the one hand their ally, the Armenian Artavasdes, withdrew in alarm from the campaign with his indispensable cavalry. On the other, the Romans were deprived of machinery to assail the walls of Phraata, since timber to replace the lost equipment was lacking in the area. Their only hope of carrying the city lay in the tedious expedient of throwing up mounds of earth against

[1] XLIX. 25–9. [2] II. 82ff. [3] II. 20. [4] XI. 13, 3.

[5] The first form seems preferable. See below, p. 764.

the walls. To restore the spirit of the legionaries, Antony led out the main force of ten infantry legions to offer battle to the Parthians. By a skilful manoeuvre, the Roman commander marched his infantry back across the Parthian front, where the horse-archers were drawn up in a crescent. The Parthians were impressed by the discipline and silence of the Roman troops as they passed at regular intervals, but imagined that their intention was to retire rather than to attack. Then the Gallic cavalry came on at full speed, and as soon as the attention of the Parthians had been diverted in their direction, the legionaries also charged, and engaged at close quarters. The Parthian cavalry were put to flight. The legionaries maintained the pursuit for a distance of five miles, and the Gallic cavalry kept it up for nearly fifteen. Yet, when the Romans came to count the Parthian losses, they found that no more than eighty Parthians had been slain and thirty captured, damage that was trivial by comparison with their own losses in the previous encounter. When, on the following day, they marched back to their position at Phraata,[1] the horse-archers regrouped to harry them, and it was with great difficulty that the retreat was finally accomplished.

As the siege dragged on, both sides became increasingly uneasy. Antony was apprehensive because of the shortage of supplies, and found that it was impossible to send out foraging parties without incurring heavy losses. The Parthian king, Phraates, was anxious lest with the onset of the Āzarbāījān winter, the feudal levies that made up the bulk of his force would return to warmer levels, and he would be left with inadequate strength to sustain the campaign. The Parthian troopers were instructed to parley with the Roman outposts, and inspire in them hopes of concluding a truce. Finally, Antony sent an official delegation to negotiate with the king. The Arsacid rejected their now conventional request for the return of the standards and prisoners captured at Carrhae, but let them understand that a Roman withdrawal would not be opposed. The emissaries were none the less dismayed at the king's haughty manner, and he is vividly described as receiving them seated on a golden throne, and twanging impatiently at his bowstring,[2] exactly as the Parthian king is depicted on the Arsacid coinage. Nevertheless, as a result of this interview, Antony decided that the safest course would be to withdraw.

At this point in the story, an eminent modern commentator gives prominence to the role of the Parthian general Monaeses.[3] We have

[1] Plutarch, *Antony* XXXIX.

[2] Dio Cassius XLIX. 27; *CAH* X, 72–3.

[3] Tarn, in *CAH* X. 72–3.

seen that he fled, early in the reign of Phraates IV, to take refuge in Roman Syria, where Antony allotted to his upkeep the revenue of several towns. Shortly before the departure of the Roman army for Armenia, Phraates "sent to Monaeses a right hand"[1] in token of amnesty. The picturesque and traditional Iranian ceremony re-enacts one that had taken place several centuries earlier, when the Achaemenian king Artaxerxes II issued a guarantee of immunity to his general Datames.[2] Monaeses then returned, with the approval of Antony, to the Parthian court. Yet while the Roman general is represented at that time as supposing that Monaeses would not only lay before the king his earlier request for the return of the standards, but would actually assist in misleading him over the Roman plans, some commentators maintain that Monaeses had all along been acting in the Parthian interest, and reported to Phraates all the details of the Roman military preparations. The several narratives make it clear that Phraates was present in person during the subsequent campaign in Atropatene, which we have just described. Although he did not go into battle personally, it is difficult to doubt that he exercised the supreme command. What is known of his stern disposition surely suggests that his was the plan to wipe out the Roman force as that of Crassus had been destroyed at Carrhae. Monaeses, it is true, must also have held a command, but it is difficult to believe that his attitude to his former benefactor Antony was equally ruthless. Though there is no need to doubt that the sympathies of the former exile were with his own countrymen, he was rather the victim of circumstances than a conspirator on either side, and would probably have been content with the mere withdrawal of the Romans. Plutarch thus reports that it was his emissary Mithradates who warned the Romans of an impending ambush, and on a second occasion helped them to find a way of escape.

The figure who played at this point a prominent part in the story of the Roman escape was the guide described in Plutarch's text as a Mardian (Latin "Mardus"). The Mardians were in fact an Iranian mountain tribe occupying an area of the Alburz Range,[3] and it is hard to understand how the Roman general could have entrusted the safety of his army to a Parthian subject, or what such a tribesman would

[1] Plutarch, *Antony* XXXVII. 2: *τοῦ δὲ Πάρθων βασιλέως τῷ Μοναίσῃ δεξίαν καταπέμψαντος* ... cf. S. M. Sherwin-White, "Hand-tokens and Achaemenid practice", *Iran* XVI (1978), p. 183.

[2] Nepos, *Datames* X. 1: "... fidemque de ea re more Persarum dextra dedisset. Hanc ut accepit a rege missam, copias parat ..."

[3] For the presence of Mardians in Āzarbāījān, see below, p. 766; cf. Tacitus, *Annals* XIV. 23.

have gained by assisting the enemy. The two Latin authors whose version of the events apparently derives from the lost book CXXX of Livy, and so may stand nearer to the original source than does the account of Plutarch, maintain that the providential well-wisher was a survivor from the defeat of Crassus, who came at night and in Parthian dress to the Roman lines, and by greeting the guards in Latin,[1] won their confidence. According to this account, the purpose of the guide was to escape himself, and return to his Italian home. This form of the story certainly seems more plausible, and gives special point to the guide's constant warnings to the Roman general that if he exposed his legions to the cavalry on level ground he would share the fate of Crassus – a direct reminiscence of the man's own experience. Editors have suggested that the true reading of the word in the text of Plutarch should be "Marsus", and the man a member of the central Italian tribe which would naturally have been represented in the army of Crassus. Thus the words which occur in the famous ode of Horace –[2]

Consenuit socerorum in armis
sub rege Medo Marsus et Apulus

would show that this prisoner had taken a Median wife, and would constitute an allusion to this very man. Since Horace would have known the Latin narrative of the expedition by Dellius, this seems a very convincing explanation. It has, however, also been suggested that the true reading should be "Margus", a reference to the fact that Roman prisoners had been settled in the eastern province of Margiana.

Whatever his origin, this providentially acquired guide certainly played a great part in securing the escape of the Roman force. For he urged Antony to return by a different and mountainous route, along which the Parthian cavalry would be at a disadvantage. On the fifth day of the exhausting march, a Roman officer, Flavius Gallus, rashly led out a large detachment of light-armed troops to attack the Parthian cavalry. He became separated from the main body and was quickly surrounded. In the ensuing action to effect his rescue, no fewer than three thousand Roman soldiers were killed and five thousand wounded, while Flavius himself died of his wounds. After this reverse, the hard-pressed Romans observed greater caution, and continued their march in the regular formation of a square, and with slingers and javelin-men

[1] Florus II. 20. 4: "Unus ex clade Crassiana Parthico habitu castris adequitat et salute Latine data, cum fidem ipso sermone fecisset . . ." Cf. Velleius Paterculus II. 82: "Captiv. cuiusdam, sed Romani, consilio et fide servatus est, qui clade Crassiani exercitus captus . . . accessit nocte ad stationem Romanam."

[2] Horace, *Odes* III. v. 8–9.

guarding the flanks and rear. On one occasion when nearly overwhelmed by assaults of the horse-archers, the Romans were reduced to adopting their celebrated "tortoise" formation, in which the front ranks knelt, and those behind protected them by holding their shields above their heads. The Parthians, thinking that they had become exhausted, came to close quarters, but the Romans leapt up and counter-attacked, inflicting some casualties and putting the rest to flight. Thus the agonizing retreat continued towards the Armenian border. The Romans had to endure one terrible night without water, when discipline began to fail, and even the tableware of the general's kitchen was plundered. After crossing a river of brackish and undrinkable water, the march was kept up until daybreak, and soon afterwards a river of fresh water was reached, after which the Parthians abandoned their pursuit.

One of the most interesting questions raised by this narrative has been the explanation of its geography. As we have seen, all commentators are fairly well agreed that the Roman army entered Atropatene (Āzarbāījān) by way of the plain of Marand, and passed round the eastern shore of the Urmīya Lake. In a famous article written many years ago,[1] the celebrated scholar and soldier Sir Henry Rawlinson argued that the city besieged by the Romans lay at the archaeological site of Takht-i Sulaimān, which has in recent years become the site of an important series of excavations conducted by the German Archaeological Mission in Iran.[2] Another view of the problem was, however, presented by the late Professor Minorsky,[3] who maintained that there was no room within the relatively restricted circuit of the walls at Takht-i Sulaimān for such a considerable town as the Phraata of Plutarch,[4] and moreover that it would scarcely have been feasible for Antony's predominantly infantry force to push forward so deep into enemy territory as to reach the Takht.[5] A further argument in favour of Minorsky's view, though not available to him at the time that his article was written, is that the subsequent campaigns of excavation at

[1] H. C. Rawlinson, "Memoir on the site of the Atropatenian Ecbatana", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* x (London, 1840), 65–158.

[2] R. Naumann *et al.*, "Takht-i Suleiman und Zendan-i Suleiman"; for details see bibliography to chapter 29(a), p. 1369.

[3] Minorsky, "Roman and Byzantine campaigns in Atropatene", in *Iranica: Twenty Articles*, pp. 86–109.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 94, where it is contrasted with Ganzaca, but the same antithesis is implied with "the great city of Phraata" (as it is called by Plutarch, *Antony* XXVIII), as noted on p. 102.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 106.

Takht-i Sulaimān have still not given clear confirmation of the existence there of any significant Parthian remains, and tend to support Minorsky's opinion that the fire-temple was established no earlier than the reign of the Sasanian Khusrau Anushīrvān (A.D. 531–79). Accordingly, Minorsky places the city besieged by Antony in the vicinity of modern Marāgha, and finds confirmation of this theory in the statement of the Arab historian al-Balādhurī that the pre-Muslim name of Marāgha was Afrāh-rōdh,[1] a name which he compares with the Phraata of Plutarch, and which suggests that the latter reading is superior to the name Praaspa given by Dio Cassius. Minorsky is in agreement with Rawlinson that in its retreat the Roman army must have moved eastwards out of Marāgha, and around the eastern side of Mount Sahand towards the plain of Tabrīz. The brackish river, on this hypothesis, is the river of Tabrīz, called Ajī Chai in its upper reaches, and in the neighbourhood of the city marked on maps as Talkharūd, the "Bitter River". In Rawlinson's own words it is "the salt stream of the Ají, the only river of this nature, I believe, in the whole of Azerbíján".[2] From this crossing Rawlinson believed that the Romans continued to march along the plain of Tabrīz north-westwards towards Marand, and that the fresh river at which their sufferings ceased was the "Saliya or Savala Chay", corrected by Minorsky to Sāvalān Chai, some fifteen miles across the plain. Yet since according to the narrative of Plutarch, the route between the two rivers was rocky and precipitous, and the whole purpose of the Roman general was to avoid the plain, one may suggest that the route could rather have been over the Gaija Bel pass between Tabrīz and Ahar, and that the Romans could have finally escaped pursuit on crossing the Ahar Chai. From this point, their six-day march to the Araxes would have presented little difficulty. Thus the expedition made its way back into Armenia, having lost, according to Plutarch, twenty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, besides a further eight thousand men in the long winter march through Armenia back to their quarters in Syria.

Despite the Parthian king's triumphant expulsion of the Roman invaders from his territory, his harsh disposition quickly gave rise to dissension among his own subjects. A dispute with the very ally in whose defence he led the Parthian armies into Atropatene, Artavasdes of Media, made the latter so apprehensive for his safety that he even sent emissaries to Antony to ask for an alliance.[3] The proconsul was

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 104, 106.

[2] Rawlinson, "Memoir", p. 116.

[3] Dio Cassius XLIX. 33; Plutarch, *Antony* LII.

delighted at the opportunity so afforded to pay off his grudge against the Armenian Artavasdes, to whose irresolution if not positive defection many were content to ascribe the Roman disaster in Atropatene. Thus strengthened, Antony once more mobilized an army, and in 34 B.C. again marched into Armenia, ostensibly to arrange a marriage with the daughter of Artavasdes for Alexander, his son by Cleopatra. When the hapless Armenian visited the Roman camp he was arrested and put in irons, perhaps on suspicion of contacts with Octavian. His son Artaxes was driven out of the country, to take refuge with Phraates, while Antony left a garrison in Armenia, and carried Artavasdes back with him to Egypt, where he was put to death. In 33 B.C. Antony was again in Armenia, contracting an alliance with the Median king against both Octavian and the Parthians. Soon afterwards Artaxes and the Parthians returned, but eventually other preoccupations obliged Antony to withdraw, and the whole region passed under Parthian control.

The death of Antony in Egypt after his defeat at Actium in 31 B.C. left Octavian, soon to be known as the emperor Augustus, undisputed master of the Roman world. He was in a strong position to achieve an amicable relationship with Phraates, since Antony had been their common enemy. To this factor may be added the new ruler's diplomatic skill, and the fortunate accident which gave him a bargaining counter. The Parthian king returned victorious to his capital, but by his haughtiness aroused the anger of the populace, and was driven into exile by a sudden rising. He visited more than one of the neighbouring states, but it was finally from certain Scythians that he obtained the reinforcements to reclaim his throne. During his enforced absence, a certain Tiridates, perhaps the general mentioned in a Greek poem from Susa,[1] seized power during 30/29 B.C. When the Scythians approached, Tiridates fled with his supporters to Augustus, taking with him as hostage the youngest of Phraates' sons, who had somehow been kidnapped from his guards.[2]

Justin's version[3] narrates the abduction of the boy as an episode of Tiridates' first exile, but his statement that the refugee and his hostage came to Augustus in Spain connects the event with the second expulsion of Tiridates. Tarn[4] connects the "Phraates son of Phraates" mentioned in the *Monumentum Ancyranum* of Augustus as a reference to this young

[1] F. Cumont, "Nouvelles inscriptions grecques de Suse", *CRAI* 1930, 211–20, quoted by Debevoise, p. 135 n 42.

[2] Dio Cassius LI. 18. 3 and LIII. 33. 1.

[3] XLII. 5–6.

[4] Tarn, "Tiridates II and the young Phraates", in *Mélanges Glotz* II, 834.

prince, but the reference might also allude to the subsequent exile of Phraataces (below, p. 68).

Envoys from Phraates soon arrived to demand the return of his son, and the surrender of the rebel. Augustus then diplomatically accepted the first demand, but refused either to return Tiridates, or on the other hand to support his pretensions to the Parthian throne. However, it seems that Tiridates soon found his way across the Parthian frontier for another attempt, and he struck tetradrachms again in Seleucia, bearing the exceptional epithet *Philorhomaios* "Friend of the Romans" in May 26 B.C. It is apparently to the period of this episode that we should refer the cryptic notice in Isidore of Charax[1] concerning a treasury of Phraates on an island in the Euphrates below Dura, and of the Arsacid having put to death his concubines (not explicitly at the same spot, as some commentators assume), seemingly to avoid their capture by the pretender. Coins show none the less that Phraates was back in power during August 26 B.C., but Tiridates made a final appearance in March 25 B.C. before he finally disappears from the historical record.[2]

THE "ROMAN PEACE" AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Meanwhile, for Roman popular opinion, memory of the defeats under Antony and Crassus was the ruling obsession, and indeed was long to remain so, an attitude which prompted repeated Roman attempts to invade Parthia on later occasions. Augustus was fully aware of the political prestige to be gained from a favourable settlement, but his growing concentration of troops in Syria may have been intended chiefly for propaganda effect. Finally, however, in 20 B.C. after prolonged negotiations the desired result was achieved, an outstanding success for Augustus' characteristic policy of conciliation, and Phraates formally returned the lost Roman standards and the surviving Roman prisoners. The event was immediately commemorated on Roman coinage from Syria to Spain.[3] From the viewpoint of Augustus this settlement, achieved wholly without bloodshed or indeed military operations, and almost without expense, gave enormous propaganda benefit, and could be represented as a redressing of the military balance so disastrously upset by the previous costly failures. From that of Phraates and the Parthians, the concessions made were a

[1] Isidore of Charax, *Parthian stations*, pp. 4–5. [2] See below, Ch. 8(*a*), p. 292.

[3] H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* 1 (London, 1923), 46; 63, nos. 46ff; 70, nos. 98ff; 84, no. 256; 86, nos. 302ff.

mere formality, a trifling return for the restoration of the kidnapped prince, and an inexpensive insurance premium against the possible damage of another Roman invasion. Thus both sides were easily able to escape from the shackles of their own military propaganda, and lay the foundations of a comparatively stable peace, the Pax Romana. The outcome was at once a tribute to the patience and judicious foresight characteristic of Augustus as a policy-maker,[1] to the favourable historical circumstances already noticed which for once made possible a degree of personal confidence between the monarchs of antagonistic powers, and indeed to the firm, and at times ruthless, determination of Phraates IV to uphold the integrity of his kingdom even in the face of the wealthiest and most effectively organized of the ancient world's military powers.

If indeed Phraates IV is rightly to be identified with the Arsaces of the second Avroman parchment, and its date 291 to be referred to the Seleucid era, in 21/20 B.C., notwithstanding the harem tragedy recorded by Isidore, four of the Arsacid's queens were living, Olenieire, Cleopatra, Baseirta and Bistheibanaps.[2] This fact did not deter Augustus from pursuing his Parthian policy by the gentler method of bestowing upon Phraates an Italian slave-girl of unusual accomplishments, known as Thea Musa.[3] Whether the gesture was explicitly by way of compensation for the Arsacid's previous losses is a matter for conjecture, but Musa quickly became the favourite of the fierce old king, and before long gave birth to a son known as Phraataces (the diminutive form of the king's own name), or by other authorities designated as Phraates (V). The infant prince was soon regarded as a candidate for the succession, and Musa, who now as acknowledged queen achieved a position of great influence at the court, persuaded the king to send his older children to Rome, and thus leave the way clear for her son. As Phraates may well have perceived, the arrangement was advantageous also from another viewpoint. For if Phraataces with the help of his mother was to inherit the throne, his half-brothers would be safer if they resided outside his jurisdiction. Having therefore called to a conference Marcus Titius, the Roman governor of Syria, the king handed over to him his four sons, Seraspadanes, Rhodaspes, Phraates

[1] The episode was naturally mentioned by Augustus in his *Res Gestae*, the record of his career, v. 29: Parthos trium exercitum Romanorum spolia et signa reddere mihi supplicesque amicitiam populi Romani petere coegi.

[2] E. H. Minns, "Parchments of the Parthian period from Avroman in Kurdistan", *JHS* xxxv (1915), 32; cf. Debevoise, p. 140.

[3] Josephus XVIII, 40, "Thesmusa", variant reading "Thermousa"; "Thea Musa" on coins.

and Vonones, together with the wives of the two last, and their four sons.[1] All these princes were maintained by Augustus at Rome in princely style, and in due course Vonones was to make a bid for the succession. They are mentioned in several Latin inscriptions,[2] and their presence is reported with pride by Augustus in the *Res Gestae*.[3]

In 2 B.C., when the aged Phraates IV was no doubt already ailing, Musa is reported to have had him taken off by poison, thus smoothing the succession of her son Phraataces. Subsequently Josephus reports that the mother became the consort of the son, an event which some authorities regard the coin of A.D. 2 (bearing the two portraits) as confirming. It is not clear whether this alliance, if such it was, should be regarded as an early instance of Zoroastrian kin-marriage; but the assumption is contradicted by the fact that the historian ascribed the subsequent Parthian rebellion against the new king partly to their *detestation* of such incest.[4] The new king was driven from the throne in A.D. 4, and himself fled to Roman Syria, where he did not long survive.

This upheaval constituted the prelude to a long period of dynastic conflict in the Parthian kingdom. A prince called Orodes (III) was called to the throne; but his violent disposition, no exception in these troubled times, led to his being cut down by the nobles at a banquet, or, in another version, on a hunting party. Envoys were then sent to Rome to ask for the release of one of the hostages to occupy the throne, and Vonones was selected. However, the patronizing Roman propaganda on the theme *Rex Parthis datus* "a king assigned to the Parthians"[5] seems to have aroused the anger of the Parthians, who once more rebelled, and set up against Vonones a certain Artabanus, who had formerly been king of Atropatene, and who now advanced towards Ctesiphon, the capital. Vonones opposed him near the entrance to the Zagros passes, and at their first encounter won a victory, which gave rise to the famous, but premature, coin-issue inscribed ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΝΩΝΗΣ ΝΙΚΗΣΑΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΝ "King Vonones victorious over Artabanus".[6] However, in the second encounter Artabanus (III) gained the upper hand, and while his rival

[1] Strabo XVI. i. 28.

[2] V. E. Gardthausen, "Die Parther in griechisch-römischen Inschriften", *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet* (Giessen, 1906), p. 844; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin 1862–) VI, no. 1799; *ibid.* XIV, no. 2216. Cf. Debevoise, p. 144.

[3] VI. 32.

[4] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 42–3.

[5] For the origin of this phrase, see below, p. 91.

[6] See below, Ch. 8 (*a*), p. 293.

took shelter in Seleucia, advanced to be proclaimed as king at Ctesiphon in A.D. 12. Vonones then escaped to Armenia, where he manoeuvred to secure the throne, but in A.D. 15/16 the Romans decided that he was an unsafe nominee, both owing to the hostility of Artabanus, and because of his own irresolution; so the unhappy prince was obliged to take sanctuary with Creticus Silanus, governor of Syria, by whom he was granted shelter and royal honours.

In A.D. 14 the Roman emperor Augustus died, and was succeeded by his adopted son, Tiberius, who sent the young Germanicus to settle affairs in Armenia and on the Parthian frontier. To reduce the possibility of provocation to Artabanus, Vonones was removed to Pompeiopolis (Soli) in Cilicia. He escaped by bribing his guard, and tried to flee to Georgia, but was arrested on the river Pyramus (Ceyhan), and run through by his guilty custodian, who hoped thus to efface the evidence of his own complicity.

The death of Vonones was followed by that of Germanicus, and during the period A.D. 19–32 tranquillity prevailed on the Euphrates frontier. Artabanus remained firmly in control of the Parthian kingdom, and his famous rescript in Greek to the municipality of Susa, dated Arsacid Era 268/December A.D. 21, was to remain the last known inscription of its type.[1] To the same period belongs the narrative given by Josephus[2] of a signal disaster that befell the Jewish population in Babylonia. It provides an instructive commentary on the extent of local autonomy that prevailed in the Parthian kingdom at this time. The city of Nearda, because of its secure position in a bend of the Euphrates, was selected by the community of the Exile as the repository of their traditional offerings of two drachmae a head for the Temple at Jerusalem. It happened that two Jewish youths of that town, Asinaeus and Anilaeus, apprenticed to a weaver, being maltreated by their master took weapons and fled to the swamps at the "Parting of the Rivers".

At this point some words of commentary are needed on the geographical situation. The Greek words just quoted suggest a Greek translation of the Aramaic term *Pallugtha* "the Canal Regulator", a term which has given its name to the modern township of Fallūja in western Iraq, where the Euphrates divided at certain periods of antiquity; and also to the canal system known to classical authors as

[1] Welles, *Royal Correspondence of the Hellenistic Period*, pp. 299ff.

[2] *Antiquities* XVIII, 311.

Pallacottas, which here diverged westwards from the original river-course, and of which the bed is today followed by the main stream of the Euphrates. The town mentioned by Josephus as Nearda appears in the Babylonian Talmud as Nehardēʿā, repeatedly named as one of the main centres of the Jewish exile. The site has not been positively located on the ground, but there are fairly close indications of its general position. Ptolemy places Naarda immediately upstream of Sippar.[1] In the Babylonian Talmud it appears as one of the last settlements of Babylonia on the road to Syria, and was enclosed not only by the Euphrates but also by a reach of the celebrated Royal Canal.[2] That channel, in Aramaic Nehar Malkā, carried water eastwards from the Euphrates to irrigate areas round Seleucia and discharge into the Tigris. A problem is that owing to realignments of the canals, the divergence of the Royal Canal varied at different periods. According to Isidore of Charax, the Royal Canal diverged at a point below Besēchana, but the distance given in his text is evidently excessive, and is usually corrected by his commentators to 12 *schoenae* or parasangs.[3] The location of Besēchana itself is anyway fixed, since the town is identical with that known later to the Sasanians as Pērōz-Shāpūr,[4] and to the Arabs as al-Anbār, of which the extensive ruins have been reported a mile or so north of Fallūja. The geographer of the ʿAbbāsid period, Ibn Serapion, places the divergence of the Royal Canal at a point somewhat less than eight parasangs, or twenty-four miles, downstream of Pērōz-Shāpūr,[5] and this indication would give a suitable position for Nehardēʿā. On the other hand, two writers of the intervening period, Pliny and Ammianus Marcellinus, regarded the channel which diverged from the Euphrates *above* Pērōz-Shāpūr – that known in Islamic times as the Nahr ʿĪsā, or at the present day as the Saqlāwiya Canal – as the authentic start of the Royal Canal. On their interpretation Nehardēʿā would have to be sought at, or near, the site of al-Anbār; and this was the theory adopted by the medieval traveller Benjamin of Tudela, who refers to "El-anbar, which is Pumbedithā in Nehardea".[6]

[1] Ptolemy, *Geographia* v. 17. 5.

[2] Cf. *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, IX, 208, quoting Qid. 70b, and Shab. 108b.

[3] *Parthian Stations*, p. 4; cf. L. Dillemann, "Ammien Marcellin et les pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre", *Syria* XXXVIII (1961), 156.

[4] Henning, "*Βεσήχανα πόλις*: ad *BSOAS* XIV, 512, n. 6", *BSOAS* XV (1953), 392; Honigmann and Maricq, *Recherches sur les "Res gestae divi Saporis"*, p. 116.

[5] Quoted by G. Le Strange, "Description of Mesopotamia and Bagdad", *JRAS* 1895, pp. 15, 70; Honigmann and Maricq, p. 117.

[6] Quoted by R. D. Barnett, "Xenophon and the wall of Media", *JHS* LXXXIII (1963), p. 14 n. 66; Naarda is also placed at Pērōz-Shāpūr by Dillemann, "Ammien Marcellin".

We are not concerned here with this localization of Pumbeditha, another important Jewish settlement during the Parthian period.[1] It seems clear, however, that Nehardē'ā lay either close to Fallūja, or some twenty-four miles downstream, and that the swamps to which Josephus refers lay yet further to the south, along the line of the Pallacottas channel, which is now the course of the main stream of the Euphrates.[2]

We return now to the two apprentices of Nehardē'ā, who quickly gathered a following of youths as impoverished as themselves, and began to earn a substantial living through brigandage. The satrap of Babylonia led against them a force of cavalry, intending to surprise them on the Sabbath. The outlaws, however, were forewarned by the neighing of the horses, and putting aside their religious scruples, defended themselves resolutely, and defeated the Parthians with great slaughter. At this point the king Artabanus intervened personally, and summoned the brothers to court under safe conduct. When first Anilaeus, and then Asinaeus, had been prevailed on to attend, he conferred on them the governorship of their territory – though much to the chagrin of his Parthian commander-in-chief Abdagases. That the king had political reasons for this unexpected decision is evident enough. In the province of Babylonia at this time not only were many Parthian nobles disaffected, but at the same time the "Syrians" and the Hellenists were at loggerheads, and moreover the city of Seleucia was on the brink of open rebellion against the Parthian government, which in fact broke out some years later in A.D. 35–6 as we shall see. At the same time, the pretender Tiridates, with Roman support, was planning an attempt upon the Parthian throne. In such a dangerous situation, it is easy to see that the king would have welcomed the establishment of a new military force, committed to neither of the leading factions, and attached, if only by his toleration, directly to the ruler himself.

For fifteen years, as Josephus relates, the brothers governed their province successfully and firmly. Only when Anilaeus was tempted by guilty passion did their position decline. A certain Parthian general in the area had a wife of surpassing beauty, whose fame spread far and

[1] The location of Pum-baditha at Pērōz-Shāpūr is rejected by Maricq, "Res gestae divi Saporis", in *Classica et Orientalia*, p. 97 (= *Syria* xxxv (1958), 355); long ago G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 74, placed Pum-Baditha twenty-eight miles north of Kufa on the Hindiya Channel, at the divergence of the Badāt Canal.

[2] Herzfeld, *Persian Empire*, p. 230 n. 2, places Nehardē'ā at Tall al-Kanīsa, between al-Anbār and Sippar. Further notes on Tall al-Kanīsa will be found in Barnett's "Xenophon and the wall of Media", pp. 15–16.

wide. The former apprentice was determined to win her for himself, and this he could only achieve by making a sudden attack upon the husband, killing him in battle, and carrying off his widow. He quickly made her his wife, but the lady took advantage of this enhanced status to resume her ancestral worship of images, some of which she had contrived to bring away with her into her captivity. Such unorthodoxy aroused bitter complaints from the followers of the brothers, who protested to Asinaeus about this marriage to a gentile, so violently indeed that one of the party who spoke too freely was even put to death. Asinaeus in fact took no action against his brother, but the wife of Anilaeus, perceiving the danger that was to be anticipated from the discontent of their followers, put poison in the food of Asinaeus, so leaving her husband as the sole leader of the band.

Anilaeus next began to ravage the property of a leading Parthian, by name Mithradates, a member of the high nobility, and a son-in-law of Artabanus the king. The aggrieved nobleman naturally sallied out with his cavalry to chastise the raiders, but Anilaeus surprised them in a night attack on the Parthian camp, and not only dispersed the Parthians but captured Mithradates himself. For fear of reprisals against the Jewish community at Babylon, Anilaeus finally decided that Mithradates should be released. However, enraged by his humiliation, Mithradates returned to the attack with greatly enlarged forces, and on the second occasion heavily defeated the Jewish forces, whose losses were estimated by Josephus at tens of thousands. Though Anilaeus and his bodyguard made good their escape to the marshes, and built up their force by recruiting runaways and outlaws, the new recruits could not compare in efficiency with those who had fallen, and he was eventually surprised by the Babylonians and put to death.

The anecdote of the two brothers had a direct bearing on the subsequent revolt of Seleucia against the Parthian rulers. For now that military support was removed, the Babylonians began to harass the Jewish settlements in the Euphrates region. The inhabitants, lacking means of defence, decamped to the city of Seleucia and settled there. However, that city itself in A.D. 35–6 broke into open rebellion against the Parthian empire; and within three years a state of social tension became obvious even within the walls. Initially hostility had prevailed between the Greek community and the local Aramaeans. The Jews at first allied themselves with the latter party, which thus became the stronger; but later the Greeks contrived to reach an understanding

with the Aramaeans, and the two factions combined to make a surprise attack on the Jews. No fewer than fifty thousand of the latter are reported to have been massacred, and the survivors expelled from the city. Some fled to the adjoining royal residence of Ctesiphon, while others from the surrounding districts made good their escape to the cities of Nehardēʿā and Nisibis.[1] Despite its wealth of colourful detail there are several obscurities in the narrative; it is not clear what became of the Jewish refugees who retired to Ctesiphon, and why the fugitives who returned to Nehardēʿā felt themselves secure there, while previously they had preferred to evacuate that site to settle at Seleucia.

Having thus traced the fortunes of the populous Jewish community in the growing disorder that prevailed at this time in Parthian Babylonia, we must return to consider the history of the kings. In A.D. 35 the Roman emperor Tiberius, egged on by secret emissaries of the Parthian nobility, in particular a certain Sinnaces, undermined the Parthian position in Armenia by effecting a reconciliation between Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, and his brother Mithradates. The former was then induced to place his brother on the Armenian throne. The Arsacid incumbent, known only as Arsaces, was assassinated, and when Artabanus sent his son Orodes to restore the situation he was defeated by the numerous Iberian infantry force, supported by Sarmatian cavalry from beyond the Caucasus.

Artabanus brought up his entire army to repair the setback, but Vitellius, Roman governor of Syria, massed his troops against the frontier of Mesopotamia, thus creating a diversion. At the same time, the Romans played on the disloyalty of certain prominent Parthian nobles. Sinnaces, a leading malcontent, urged others to revolt, and soon even the determined Artabanus found he had no recourse but to withdraw to "Scythia", east of the Caspian Sea, and to retire to the life of a private citizen, until a change in his fortunes might enable him to return with the help of his Hyrcanian and Carmanian allies.[2]

When the throne was thus standing vacant, Vitellius seized the chance to ferry across the Euphrates the exiled Parthian prince Tiridates. Several Parthian nobles offered their services to the pretender, including Ornospades, himself a former exile, the treacherous Sinnaces, and a certain Abdagaeses who handed over the treasure and the regalia,

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII, 310–79.

[2] Tacitus, *Annals* VI, 31–7, now provides the main narrative; some additional details, mostly unfavourable to Rome, are given in Jospehus XVIII, 97–100, who directly states that the plots of Vitellius were aimed at the life of the king.

and whose behaviour suggests he may have been identical with the resentful general of the episode of Anilaeus (above, p. 72). Yet the Parthian spirit would not long endure a Roman protectorate, and though Seleucia received the pretender, two important satraps, Phraates and Hiero, refused to attend the coronation; instead, they sent to Artabanus in Hyrcania. Still in the tattered costume of a hunter, and holding his bow, the veteran king put himself at the head of the anti-Roman party, and soon found himself in the vicinity of Seleucia at the head of a large army. Tiridates, dismayed, took the fatal decision to retire west of the Tigris into Mesopotamia. His retreat assumed the appearance of a rout, and he soon fled back across the Euphrates into Syria.

Tiberius now instructed his governor to come to terms with Artabanus. The two met, each accompanied by a bodyguard, on the bridge of the Euphrates, and were entertained to a banquet by Herod the tetrarch.[1] Dio Cassius, however, places this episode after the death of Tiberius and under Caligula,[2] a dating which the silence of Tacitus may be held to confirm. The terms of the treaty are not known in detail, but an essential Roman demand was that a son of the Parthian king should be sent to Rome as a surety for the maintenance of peace, and the hostage in this case was the prince Darius.[3] When the treaty was agreed, Vitellius returned to Antioch, and Artabanus to Babylon. There is perhaps no need to follow Debevoise[4] here in assuming that Josephus' use here of the word "Babylon" is actually a reference to Seleucia, capital city of Babylonia. For this metropolis was still in open revolt, and some of its factions secretly in touch with Rome, so as to make even the established Parthian royal residence at Ctesiphon an inconvenient centre for the ruler when the routes to the threatened Euphrates frontier, and the Tigris bridges, might so easily be blocked by a hostile force. In such circumstances, it is not difficult to accept that Artabanus had temporarily established his court at Babylon, just as did his successor Vardanes a few years later, according to the testimony of the biographer Philostratus.[5]

The Roman emperor Tiberius died in A.D. 37, but the plots he had set afoot against Artabanus III were by no means disarmed after his death. Learning that an assassination attempt was once more being

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 101; Suetonius, *Vitellius* 2. 4.
[2] LIX, 17. 5; Suetonius, *Vitellius* 2. 4.
[3] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 101; Suetonius, *Caligula* 19.
[4] P. 163.
[5] *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* II. 28.

planned, the Parthian king took refuge in the semi-independent frontier kingdom of Adiabene, then under the rule of a certain Izates, a member of the local dynasty who, not long before, during a visit to the commercial seaport of Spasinou Charax,[1] had become a convert to Judaism. In the cordial reception given by the local princeling to the exiled king, we see once more evidence for the close relations existing at this time between the Jewish community and the Arsacid rulers in their hour of crisis. Izates received his former overlord with honour, and undertook to effect his restoration to his kingdom. He wrote to the Parthian leaders urging them to restore the king, and even persuaded the Arsacid prince Cinnamus,[2] who had been nominated to the throne, to write offering to abdicate in favour of Artabanus; and ultimately himself once more to place the diadem on the head of the aged king. Izates was rewarded for his fidelity with such traditional honours as the right to wear his tiara upright after the fashion of the kings, and to sleep on a bed of gold;[3] he was further endowed with the territory of Nisibis.

In A.D. 38, the long reign of Artabanus came to an end, and he bequeathed the kingdom to his son Vardanes.[4] Another son, Gotarzes, is reported at first to have seized the throne,[5] but when he put to death the third brother, Artabanus, with his wife and child, there was a general outcry, which resulted in an invitation being sent to Vardanes. The latter, possibly to some extent forewarned, surprised the usurper by covering the distance of three hundred miles in only two days, a feat which is not to be dismissed as impossible,[6] and was acclaimed by the governors of the adjoining provinces. Only the Seleucians rejected the succession of Vardanes, who promptly laid siege to the city; but Gotarzes returned to the attack with reinforcements from the Hyrcanians and Dahae, and forced Vardanes to withdraw, on the evidence of Tacitus,[7] to "the plains of Bactria". This detail is surprising, since it is difficult to see by what route Vardanes could have reached Bactria, if Hyrcania and the land of the Dahae were under the control of his rival.

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* xx. 34.

[2] McCown and Albright, *BASOR* LXVI (April 1937), 20.

[3] Josephus, *Antiquities* xx. 67. [4] *Ibid.* 69. [5] Tacitus, *Annals* XI. 8.

[6] "Biduo tria milia stadiorum invadit." It has lately been shown that the stade in Asia may conveniently be reckoned at 10 to the mile. G. G. Ramsay, *The Annals of Tacitus* II (London, 1909), 10, reckoned such speed of travel as impossible, but Debevoise, p. 167, n. 3 points out that Tiberius himself once travelled 184 miles in 24 hours, cf. Pliny, *Natural History* VII, 20, 84. The relays of the Persian courier service made great speeds possible. [7] *Annals* XI. 8.

Upheavals followed in Armenia, for Claudius had released the Iberian Mithradates, for some time held in detention at Rome, and he now began to reoccupy the country with Roman assistance. At the same time, a battle was pending between Vardanes and Gotarzes. However, when the latter revealed to the former a plot of the popular party against both the rival Arsacids, the two contenders came to an agreement, under which Vardanes was to retain the throne, and Gotarzes to retire to Hyrcania. Vardanes was next able to secure the capitulation of Seleucia, the city having been in revolt for seven years.

An interesting sidelight is provided on the reign of Vardanes by the journey across Babylonia at this time of the itinerant Greek philosopher, Apollonius of Tyana.[1] Confidence in the reliability of this account is strengthened by the fact that its later description of the Indo-Parthian city of Taxila was substantially confirmed by excavation.[2] The tale of the journey across Babylonia conveys a certain tone of credulity, but is avowedly based on the diary of the philosopher's companion, the simpleton Damis. Its details are, however, convincing enough. Vardanes had been reigning for two years and two months when the travellers found him residing at Babylon, and the episodes of palace life, and a lavish horse-sacrifice, sound wholly in character.

At this time Vardanes undertook a tour of his provinces,[3] and tried to persuade his vassal Izates of Adiabene to take military action against the Roman interests in Armenia.[4] This Izates was unwilling to do, since five of his sons were then in Roman territory, whereat Vardanes even threatened war with Adiabene. Gotarzes meanwhile rose once more in revolt against his brother, who advanced and defeated him on the river Erindes,[5] a stream on the boundary of Media and Hyrcania. Vardanes pressed on to conquer all the provinces as far as the boundary of Aria, and erected a monument to commemorate his triumphs; but was finally murdered during a hunting expedition, his death taking place towards the end of A.D. 45. Gotarzes (II) was now the strongest candidate for the throne, but before long, complaints of his ruthlessness were once more circulating, and a faction of the Parthian nobles sent secret appeals to the Roman emperor to provide another king.

The latest pretender was Meherdates, grandson of Phraates IV, the

[1] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, ed. F. C. Conybeare (London, 1912), I. 28–40.

[2] Sir John Marshall, *Taxila* (Cambridge, 1951), I, 64. Cf. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* II. 20, 23.

[3] Tacitus, *Annals* XI. 10.

[4] Josephus, *Antiquities* XX. 69.

[5] A reading of Tacitus emended by Ryck to "Charindas", on the strength of Ptolemy, *Geographia* VI. 2. 2.

story of whose bid for the Parthian throne forms a picturesque episode in the narrative of Tacitus.[1] The account opens with a glimpse of the senatorial debate, in which the historian summarizes the persuasive speech of the Parthian nobles. There follows the sententious reply of Claudius, who likened himself to Augustus, clumsily exhorting Meherdates to treat his future subjects with respect, and to the Parthians lauding this "pupil of the City", urging them to remain constant to the new ruler, and avoid fickle changes of their kings. Rome, he concluded, had grown so great that she only wished neighbouring powers to be at peace.

Finally in A.D. 49, the governor of Syria, Gaius Cassius, escorted Meherdates to the Euphrates. He crossed at Zeugma (Birecik), to be welcomed on the eastern bank by Abgar, ruler of Edessa. Messages were received from his supporter Carenes,[2] the Parthian governor of Mesopotamia, urging him to hasten forwards. Yet the inexperienced prince dawdled at Edessa, and then from the direct route turned aside into Armenia, which was already suffering in the grip of winter. By the time his men had reached the Tigris they were in poor shape, but they joined forces with Carenes and made the crossing. Izates of Adiabene also attached himself to the invading army, but secretly his sympathies were with Gotarzes; so the combined force pressed on past the ruins of Nineveh and the citadel of Arbela.[3]

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the conflict, Gotarzes was occupied in religious observances near the mountain of Sanbulos. Tacitus gives an eerie account of the cult of a hunter-god whom he identifies with Hercules, at whose temple horses saddled for hunting were kept ready at nightfall. They were taken out into the darkness with full quivers, to return later breathless and with the quivers empty. Later the priests were informed in a vision of the way by which the god had passed, and went out to collect the animals that had been brought down. The legend has often been linked with the cult of the Assyrian deity Nergal, god of hunting as of war and victory, whose worship was no doubt identified by Iranians with their cult of Mithra. The scene of the hunting-fresco at Dura-Europos[4] corresponds with that which Tacitus

[1] *Annals* XII. 10–14.

[2] The Latin spelling represents the hereditary title Kārēn, New Persian Qārin, which designated one of the six great families of Parthian, as later of Sasanian Iran.

[3] I accept here as well founded the gloss of the Agricola manuscript of Tacitus. Some of the editors of Tacitus, including H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*, II, 76n, maintain that the words *castellum insigne fama* refer to a fort actually at the village of Gaugamela.

[4] M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and Its Art* (Oxford, 1938), pl. XVIIIa (= Ann Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford, 1973), pl. 16).

envisaged. The name of Hercules has been found in a Greek inscription at Karafto[1] in Iranian Kurdistan, and suggests it was the site of a similar cult; since evidence for topography in the brief Latin account is scanty, it may not have been the identical spot at which Gotarzes offered his vows. The latter's objective was to defend the line of a river named as the Corma, perhaps the present-day Lesser Zāb. Gotarzes employed delaying-tactics, and induced first Izates, and later Abgar, to desert the invading force. Soon Meherdates was forced by his deteriorating situation to risk a battle; and Gotarzes was encouraged by his enemy's reduced numbers to accept it. The issue of the sanguinary encounter hung in the balance, until Carenes, pressing a pursuit too far, was surrounded and overthrown. Meherdates abandoned the struggle, entrusting his safety to his father's vassal Parrax,[2] by whom, however, he was betrayed, and handed over to the victor. Gotarzes comtemptuously spared the pretender's life, cutting off his ears to disqualify him from the throne, and publicly reviling him as a Roman puppet.

A word must be said at this point about the attribution by Herzfeld of a rock-sculpture at Bīsitūn to the second Gotarzes.[3] This sculpture adjoins another which bears the name of Mithradates II (pp. 41 ff., above), and of which the accompanying inscription mentions a Gotarzes described as "Satrap of satraps". Presumably he was the same personage who later ascended the throne as Gotarzes I. No evidence is provided by Herzfeld to substantiate his case that the neighbouring sculpture represents a *different* Gotarzes. Moreover, the inscription over the relief with which we are now concerned mentions "*Gotarzes Geopothros*" "Gotarzes the son of Gēv". Gotarzes II was actually the son of the Arsacid Artabanus III, and could hardly have been described as "the son of Gēv", which seems to be an argument against Herzfeld's interpretation. Moreover the sculpture is too similar to the other in treatment and style, having apparently similar Greek inscriptions, to be dated as much as a hundred and fifty years later. Now that the importance of the historical role of Gotarzes I can be better appreciated than in Herzfeld's time, the ascription of rock-sculptures to his later namesake can hardly be supported.

[1] Sir Aurel Stein, "An archaeological journey in western Iran", *GJ* XCII. 4 (1938), 336, and *Old Routes of Western Iran* (London, 1940), pp. 326–44, esp. p. 340.

[2] This Latin form represents the Parthian name "Farrak".

[3] *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935) p. 56.

CONTINUATION OF CONFLICT WITH ROME OVER ARMENIA

In A.D. 51, apparently the year after his victory, Gotarzes II died, either of disease,[1] or as the result of a conspiracy.[2] He was succeeded by Vonones, then reigning in Media, of whom history records "nothing either good or bad", and who disappeared within a few months. The son[3] of the last then acceded to the throne, under the designation of Vologeses I. The son of a Greek inmate of the harem, his rise to the throne was assisted by his two brothers. The elder, Pacorus, he installed as sub-king in Atropatene; for the younger, Tiridates, he sought to obtain the throne of Armenia, which was at this time under the control of Rhadamistus, son of the Iberian king Pharasmenes. Rhadamistus had invaded the country and captured the stronghold of Gorneae, putting to death there the Roman nominee Mithradates (who was in fact his uncle) together with the wife and children of the latter. Gorneae is the now well-known archaeological site of Garni, in Soviet Armenia, situated twenty-seven kilometres east of Erevan, in the confluence of two rivers.[4] The monuments include the city-wall, a remarkable temple and a palace,[5] together with a Greek inscription of the already mentioned Tiridates, who eventually became king of Armenia, and indeed one of its most famous and successful rulers on the Arsacid side.

The uncontrolled aggression of Rhadamistus, in which Pollio, the Roman commander of Mithradates' garrison had actually connived,[6] reflected most unfavourably on the Roman authorities and policy. The moment was ripe for Vologeses of Parthia to invade the country on behalf of Tiridates, and his cavalry promptly drove out the Iberian forces of Rhadamistus. The capitals of Artaxata and Tigranocerta were quickly seized, but the onset of a bitter winter, lack of supplies, and the outbreak of an epidemic forced the Parthians to withdraw in their turn. Rhadamistus returned, treating his subjects even more harshly than he had previously; and before long they were in open rebellion and

[1] Tacitus, *Annals* XII. 14.

[2] Josephus, *Antiquities* XX. 74.

[3] According to Tacitus, *Annals* XII. 14, the more substantial authority; Josephus, *Antiquities* XX. 74, makes no mention of the ephemeral Vonones, and calls Vologeses the brother, apparently of Gotarzes.

[4] A. Mongait, *Archaeology in the USSR* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 226–8; Pelican edition (London, 1961), pp. 214–15.

[5] D. M. Lang, *Armenia, Cradle of Civilization* (London, 1971), pp. 144–5.

[6] The detailed narrative of these events is given by Tacitus, *Annals* XII. 44–52.

laid siege to his palace. Soon his only recourse was to escape, with his wife, both on horseback. The queen, Zenobia by name, happened to be pregnant, and was not long able to withstand the rigours of the flight. Unable to continue, she begged her husband to end her life rather than abandon her to the rebels; and when no entreaties prevailed on her to go further, Rhadamistus in desperation stabbed her with his Median dagger, flung her body into the Araxes, and made his escape to his father's palace at Mtskheta. Zenobia, however, was neither dead nor fatally injured. The current washed her up in a placid backwater, where shepherds found her breathing, and manifestly alive. They bound up her wound, applied such simple remedies as they possessed, and eventually, guessing her royal origin, sent her to the Parthian contender Tiridates, who shortly afterwards re-established his power in the country. He received the unfortunate queen kindly, and provided for her in a manner appropriate to her rank.

It is a feature of the surviving historical tradition on Parthia, derived as it is chiefly from Roman sources, that it forms an interminable catalogue of military expeditions, and shows little interest in Parthian manners or aspirations. The few Parthians mentioned in the narrative are depicted as shadowy figures, and enlightening insights are rare, though not wholly lacking. Latin authors tended to share the obsession of the Roman public, itself no doubt often stimulated by official propaganda, with revenge for the ancient disasters of Crassus and Antony. A succession of ruthless, stubborn, but no doubt efficiently conducted Roman invasions dominate the last century and a half of the story, and it is chiefly from their rather inconclusive itineraries that some details can be gained of Parthian culture and topography. Armenia, a country now increasingly permeated by Parthian influences, and traditionally ruled by princes of Arsacid descent, remained throughout the bone of contention. Direct Roman administration was only sporadically attempted, and never lasted long. For the rest, the influence of Rome was chiefly applied to intrigues designed to undermine Parthian authority, and to the setting up of nominees to counterbalance the Arsacid contenders.[1] Marching and counter-marching designed to support these policies inevitably inflicted great devastation on Armenian cultural life and its main urban centres, with the ultimate result that the Parthian element in the country continued to grow. At the same

[1] There exists a voluminous modern critical literature on the wars and diplomatic manoeuvres of Rome in relation to Armenia. See, for example, the items listed by Debevoise, p. 174, n. 101.

time, Roman policies designed to wear down the Parthian kingdom, combined with dynastic feuds, and the terrible smallpox epidemic of A.D. 165, eventually so weakened the Arsacid state that it succumbed, not indeed to the Romans, but to the far more highly organized and centralized Sasanian kingdom. Thus Rome was in the end provided with a far more powerful antagonist, while the last pockets of specifically Arsacid tradition survived for several generations not in Iran but in Armenia.

In A.D. 54 Nero succeeded Claudius as emperor at Rome. News of the Parthian reoccupation of Armenia caused dismay, and the eastern legions were ordered into a state of readiness. For the moment, however, the rebellion against the Parthian king Vologeses I of a son, Vardanes, caused the Parthians to withdraw again from Armenia, and led to a lull in developments. A seasoned general, Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo, was transferred from Germany to take command of the Roman forces on the Armenian frontier. Both Corbulo and the Roman legate of Syria sent messages to Vologeses urging him to keep the peace, and asking for the provision of the usual hostages. These Vologeses provided without reluctance, perhaps, as Tacitus suggests, as a means of removing suspected rebels from the country. For the moment, a political vacuum prevailed in Armenia. Vologeses would not allow his brother to give up the kingdom, and Corbulo felt it his duty to restore the Roman empire to the boundaries won by Lucullus and by Pompey. The allegiance of the Armenians was divided. Invitations were sent to both armies, Roman and Parthian, but the rule of Parthia was on the whole preferred, on account of the similarity of customs, and more lenient domination.

Corbulo was a stern old disciplinarian of the traditional school. His rigorous training had a salutary effect on the eastern legions enervated by decades of peacetime conditions. He caused them to spend the winter in tents on the Anatolian plateau, thus seasoning the troops, though many lost limbs by frost-bite. Deserters were at once punished with death, a practice found in the aggregate to reduce losses. Tiridates, supported by his brother Vologeses, now sent flying columns to raid Roman supporters in Armenia far and wide. Corbulo retaliated with similar tactics against the Parthian adherents, and encouraged such Roman allies as King Antiochus of Commagene, Pharasmenes of Iberia, and the Moschi tribesmen to raid outlying regions of Armenia. Tiridates proposed negotiations, but Corbulo knew that because of a

revolt in Hyrcania Vologeses had been obliged to withdraw his forces and leave Tiridates unsupported. Mention must here be made of the broader political implications of references to Hyrcania which appear in the narrative of Tacitus. In Central Asia by this time, A.D. 59, the empire of the Kushāns was rising to a position of great strength. Within a year or two they were to invade the Punjab and occupy Taxīla.[1] To the west there is little doubt that Kushān control extended at least as far as Marv. It is surprising that in the historical literature of the earlier Roman empire, the kingdom of the Kushāns is never specifically named. Occasional references in Latin texts to the "Bactrians" may at times relate to the movements of the Kushāns,[2] but only in the vaguest terms. The only extant writer of the classical world to make specific mention of the Kushāns was Bardesanes of Edessa,[3] the genuineness of whose information on eastern topics is attested by his giving the first description of the people of Gīlān, on the Caspian coast; amongst whom, as any recent traveller knows, the bulk of the agricultural work is undertaken by the women. Modern historical knowledge of the strength of the Kushān empire, and its close proximity to Hyrcania, shows how powerful would have been the threat to which Vologeses reacted, and which resulted in the way being opened for Corbulo's invasion of Armenia.

The Roman force is thought to have advanced eastwards from the vicinity of present-day Erzurum. A suggested conference, which was to be held in the presence of both armies, proved abortive; but Tiridates was not able to interfere with Roman supplies being brought up from the Black Sea coast. The outlying Armenian castles were attacked and stormed, the most important of these being the stronghold of Volandum. No quarter was given to the survivors of the garrison, and the civilian inhabitants were deported and sold as slaves. Thence the large Roman force marched down the valley of the Araxes, its left flank resting on the foothills, and drove off the unsupported cavalry force of Tiridates. The capital city of Artaxata had to open its gates, but though the lives of the citizens were therefore spared, the walls were levelled and the entire city burnt to the ground. From Artaxata,

[1] See below, Ch. 5.

[2] For example the famous phrase μαχιμώτατον ἔθνος Βακτριανῶν . . . in Ch. 47 of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, as emended by J. Kennedy, "A passage in the Periplus", *JRAS* 1913, p. 127; for a different interpretation, see J. A. B. Palmer, "*Periplus Maris Erythraei*: remarks on Chapter 47", *Classical Quarterly* XLIII (1949), 61–4.

[3] *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, ed. H. J. W. Drijvers (Assen, 1965), p. 47.

Corbulo marched back, apparently round the eastern shore of Lake Van, to deal with Tigranocerta. The citizens of Armenia's southern capital reckoned discretion the better part of valour, and opened their gates to receive the Roman army, who spent the winter of A.D. 59 in the city. The success of Corbulo's campaign had been greatly assisted by the fact that the Parthians were occupied in their Hyrcanian war. Hyrcanian ambassadors had reached Corbulo, apparently at Artaxata, to point out the services they were rendering the Roman cause. He had sent them on to Rome to conclude an alliance with the emperor; but when they returned, he did not allow them to travel eastwards across the Euphrates, for fear of their being intercepted by Parthian patrols; instead he sent them with an escort to the shores of the Red Sea, "to reach their home by avoiding Parthian territory".[1] Interpretations of this striking phrase have been various, but there is little doubt that the opinion of Rawlinson is the most satisfactory:[2] the envoys would have returned by sea via India, since only thus could they have avoided Parthian controls. That it was possible to reach Hyrcania by so huge a detour resulted from the expansion of the Kushān empire at this time. The Hyrcanians in question will either have been Kushān allies, or the term used by Tacitus in fact referred to a Kushān force that was operating on the soil of Hyrcania.

After the removal of Corbulo to Tigranocerta, Tiridates returned to northern Armenia from Atropatene. In the spring, probably of A.D. 60, the Roman force marched out once more to drive him back. Intransigent districts were ravaged with fire and sword, and Nero resolved to place Tigranes, a Cappadocian prince, upon the throne. He was installed at Tigranocerta with a strong Roman escort: one thousand legionaries, three allied regiments and two squadrons of cavalry. Soon the new ruler had gained so much confidence that he began to raid the boundaries of Adiabene. Monobazus, sub-king of that region at the time, appealed to Vologeses, and once more the Parthian royal army, under the command of a certain Monaeses, swept into Armenia and besieged Tigranocerta. The city, however, was strongly held, and Corbulo had sent in two legions to strengthen the defenders. After several unsuccessful attempts at escalade, in which the contingents from Adiabene sustained heavy losses, the Parthian force began to lose heart. Corbulo now sent to the

[1] Tacitus, *Annals* XIV. 25: Dato praesidio ad litora maris rubri deduxit, unde vitatis Parthorum finibus patrias in sedes remeavere.

[2] Rawlinson, *Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 271 n.

king an officer with a message of protest, threatening to invade Parthian territory if the siege was not raised. Even more decisive, at this moment, was the descent of a large swarm of locusts. By devouring all the pasture required by the Parthian cavalry, they put Monaeses in a danger from which he was only extricated when Vologeses, thirty (Roman) miles away at Nisibis, expressed a wish to send an embassy to the Roman emperor, and ordered his forces to withdraw. Though this may have been partly a diplomatic manoeuvre, it seems true that a genuine wish for settlement of the Armenian deadlock was gaining ground on both sides. To Corbulo came orders to withdraw his troops from Armenia to Syria; then, when the Parthian ambassadors returned unsuccessful, a new Roman general, Caesinius Paetus, arrived to take over the Armenian command. He was to place Armenia under direct Roman rule. As a general, however, he was in no way the equal of Corbulo, and it was not long before he found himself in difficulties. His troops were concentrated at Rhandeia, in the valley of the Murād Ṣū[1] eastwards of the present Elazig. His wife and son, with a detached cohort, were left for safety nearby at Arsamosata. His attempt to block the Taurus passes against Vologeses was a failure, and his advance guard having been scattered, the remainder of his men were besieged in their legionary camp. Soon the Romans were in difficult straits. An appeal for help was sent to Corbulo in Syria, but while he was still three marches away, Paetus came to terms with Vologeses, agreeing to evacuate Armenia and abandon his camp, on condition that he was allowed to retreat unhindered to Cappadocia. The Romans even undertook to construct a bridge across the River Arsanias (Murād Ṣū) for the benefit of the advancing Parthians, before their departure. Their retreat by forced marches to the Euphrates, where they met the relieving army of Corbulo, is depicted as a humiliating rout. It had also been agreed that Vologeses should again be permitted to send emissaries to Nero, who arrived at the same time as evasive dispatches from Paetus. The ambassadors lauded the moderation of Vologeses, and proposed that Tiridates should come to Rome to receive from Nero's hands the diadem of Armenia, a duty from which he was only deterred by his religious obligations as a Magian priest. The delegation were dismissed with gifts, but without a decision, and Nero determined to renew the war under Corbulo's command. Four legions were concen-

[1] Bernard W. Henderson, "Controversies on Armenian topography: II. Rhandeia and the River Arsanias", *Journal of Philology* LVI (1903), 271–86.

trated at Melitene (Malaṭiya) with all their auxiliaries, and Corbulo pressed eastwards, reopening the route used by Lucullus. He drove out of their strongholds the Armenian barons or *megistanae* known as hostile to the Romans. The Parthians were none the less disinclined to push matters to extremes, and sent letters requesting negotiations. To these Corbulo replied in conciliatory terms, and eventually there was an impressive meeting of the two armies, hostages were exchanged, and Corbulo held a meeting with Tiridates. The latter stressed that he had suffered no defeat, yet that he was ready to go to Rome and receive the diadem of Armenia from the hands of Nero. Tiridates observed with interest the routines and ceremonies of the Roman army; and after a visit to his brothers Vologeses and Pacorus at Ecbatana, and after assurances that he would be received in Roman territory with the honours accorded to a consul, retaining his sword and being received in state by the provincial governors, he was ready to set out on the elaborate overland journey to Rome that his priestly scruples were said to demand.[1] He paid homage to Nero at Naples, and re-enacted the ceremony publicly at Rome. There he was declared king of Armenia, and invested with the diadem, before departing, this time partly by sea to Dyrrachium, to return to Artaxata. Thus after a ding-dong battle for control of the region, Armenia was finally settled as a juridical condominium, with an Arsacid ruler who received his investiture from the Roman emperor. None the less, in practical terms, the Parthian influence in the region was now overwhelming. Thus with Tiridates I the Arsacids were established in Armenia, and the Roman military demonstrations availed only to hasten the outcome that they were designed to avert.

The claim by Latin writers that Tiridates possessed the status of a Magian priest draws attention also to religious developments in Parthia under Vologeses I. According to an interpretation of passages in the *Vendidād* and the *Dēnkart*, Vologeses may have been the ruler responsible for an early collection of scriptural texts which later developed into the Avesta.[2] The consensus of specialist opinion is, however, inclined to reject the view that a *written*, rather than an orally transmitted text of the Avesta existed in Arsacid times,[3] so that it is in the latter context that this tradition has to be seen. The name of Vologeses,

[1] Tacitus, *Annals* xv. 31, which closes that author's account of Parthian affairs in the *Annals*. Cf. xv. 24.

[2] Debevoise, p. 196.

[3] M. Boyce, "Middle Persian literature", *HO* iv, section 2, no. 1, p. 33; H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-century Books*, 151.

a figure of major distinction amongst the Arsacid rulers, is also perpetuated by his part in the foundation of the city in Babylonia which was variously known as Vologesias, Vologesocerta or Valāshābād. It has been shown by Maricq that all three names apply to the same city, situated on the Royal Canal some five kilometres south-west of Seleucia.[1] The new foundation may have served two purposes for Arsacid policy at this time. On the one hand, it provided a replacement for the alien city of Seleucia, of which since its rebellion the Parthian kings had sought steadily to diminish the influence in the kingdom. Secondly, it may have provided a remedy for the silting of the original harbour at Seleucia, which by this date may well have become increasingly inconvenient, and ripe for replacement by the new entrepot at the entrance to an improved Royal Canal. In harmony with the trends here noted in the home policy of Vologeses I, of reducing the influence of the Hellenistic element, and increasing that of the Magians and their literature, we find also that on the Arsacid drachma coinage of the Iranian plateau, the Greek inscriptions were allowed to become virtually indecipherable, and new inscriptions in Parthian script, on the obverse of the coin, and at first abbreviated, were provided to indicate the identity of the ruler who issued them.

It was part of the achievement of Vologeses that the stable peace between the two empires after A.D. 64 resulted in a dearth of information on Parthia from western sources. Apart from routine diplomatic exchanges, only an invasion of Parthian territory by the Alans of south Russia, themselves an Iranian people, in A.D. 72 or soon after, attracted the attention of the historians.[2]

TRAJAN'S PARTHIAN WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

Vologeses I remained upon the Parthian throne until A.D. 79, the year of his last known dated tetradrachm. Yet already in A.D. 78, a rival, Pacorus II, was issuing dated coins from the mint of Seleucia, and must have been contending with him for possession of the mint-city. In A.D. 80–1 another pretender, Artabanus IV, briefly issued coins at that mint, but by A.D. 83 Pacorus was again the only ruler attested. Such indications of internal conflict in the Arsacid kingdom suggest conditions which could once more have tempted the Roman emperors

[1] A. Maricq, "Vologésias, l'emporium de Ctésiphon", *Classica et Orientalia* (Paris, 1965), pp. 113–25.

[2] Debevoise, p. 200, citing Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* VII, 244–51, and Suetonius, *Domitian* 2. 2.

to launch a campaign against their traditional adversary. Vespasian (A.D. 70–9), as Roman commander in Judaea before his accession, had maintained amicable, or at least neutral, relations with Vologeses I.[1] Domitian (A.D. 81–96) apparently dreamed of a great expedition in the East, but it was the soldier emperor Trajan (A.D. 98–117) who developed a practical plan, and put it into effect. In Parthia, the coinage of Pacorus came to an end in A.D. 96/7. A second Vologeses appears on the coinage in A.D. 105/6, and was soon contesting the throne with one Osroes, the brother or brother-in-law of Pacorus. As usual the immediate cause of friction with Rome arose from the situation in Armenia. Osroes deposed a certain Tiridates from the Armenian throne, and put in his place a certain Axidares, the son of Pacorus II. The decision was taken without consultation with Rome, and may thus have provided the *casus belli*. After the conclusion of the Dacian war, on 27 October 113, Trajan set sail for the east. An embassy from Osroes met the emperor at Athens, expressing their master's desire for peace, and informing him that Axidares had now been deposed from the Armenian throne, and requesting his replacement by his brother Parthamasiris. However, Trajan rejected the request, and indeed the presents brought by the embassy.

At this point a word must be said about the sources available for the expedition of Trajan. Unlike the previous Roman campaigns, it lacks a continuous and accurate narrative. A major historian, Arrian, accompanied the force, and described its operations in his *Parthica*, but the work did not survive intact. It is known from fragments in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, citations in the dictionaries of Suidas and Stephanus Byzantinus, and from book LXVIII of Dio Cassius. The latter in turn is preserved in two Byzantine collections of excerpts, and in the epitome of Xiphilinus of which portions are transmitted by Zonaras. Because of this fragmentary transmission, it is not always easy to place isolated episodes, or fix the sequence of events.[2] Independent of the Arrian tradition is the account of Malalas, a version thought to possess authority of its own based on local records from Antioch, but of rather uneven reliability and quality. To these two narratives, neither wholly satisfactory, some fixed points are added by the evidence of Latin inscriptions; and Roman coins provide a few additional hints.

[1] Tacitus, *Histories* II. 82; IV. 51; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 6; Dio Cassius LXV.

[2] A modern study of this episode is provided by F. A. Lepper, *Trajan's Parthian War*, Oxford, 1948. The nature of the sources is explained on pp. 1–5, 9–25.

Trajan devoted the year A.D. 114 to a campaign in Armenia. He established his advanced base at Melitene (Malaṭiya), where letters were received from Parthamasiris. Later he pushed forward to Arsamosata, and eventually to Satala. At Elegia, not far to the west of Erzerum, an interview was granted to Parthamasiris. The latter, following the precedent of Tiridates, removed his diadem and placed it before Trajan, expecting to have it replaced on his head; but the emperor made no such move. After the Arsacid had complained of his treatment he was permitted to withdraw, but his Roman cavalry escort brought him to a halt, and apparently on Trajan's order, killed him on the spot. The Roman army then proceeded with the detailed "pacification" of Armenia, even attacking the Mardi, who were said to live on the eastern side of Lake Van. Thus Armenia was once more made into a Roman province, and a procuratorial governor appointed. For his part in this campaign the emperor received the title "Optimus Princeps".

In the following season (A.D. 115) Trajan turned south to deal with northern Mesopotamia. Here the plan was to reduce Nisibis – hitherto the stronghold of the Parthian frontier zone – and the border kingdom of Edessa. A new, and shortened, Roman border was to be established further to the south on the line of the Chaboras river and the Jabal Sinjār. A milestone of Trajan bearing the title *Parthicus*, granted as a consequence of this campaign, was reported from the village of Karshi on the route from Nisibis to Singara.[1] The Parthian coinage issued at Seleucia during this period suggests by its alternations that a dynastic struggle was in progress between Osroes (Khusrau), currently in control of Babylonia, and Vologeses II in Iran. Such a division in the control of the Parthian kingdom was becoming increasingly usual as the 2nd century advanced, and contributed to the weakening of Parthian defence against external invaders. Moreover, it has been further suggested that Pacorus II was still alive and pursuing his claims at the same time, a view which the attribution to him of copper coins of Seleucia dated A.D. 114/5 seems to confirm. Throughout the campaign of Trajan in Upper Mesopotamia, there is no report of intervention by Osroes or his army, except for his brief demonstration against Manisares, a dissident Parthian vassal in Gordyene. Mebarsapes, ruler of Adiabene, between the Greater and Lesser Zāb rivers, was the main leader of what resistance could be offered. He was aided from time to time by other local chiefs, of whom the most celebrated was the phylarch Sporaces, whose fort at Ḥalibiya on the Euphrates is

[1] R. Cagnat, "Inscription romaine du Sindjar au nom de Trajan" *Syria* VIII (1927), 53–4.

mentioned by Shāpūr the Great in his *Res Gestae*.[1] Trajan overcame all opposition and retired to spend the winter of A.D. 115/6 at Antioch, where he narrowly escaped injury in the severe earthquake which took place in December of that year.

It is necessary at this point in the narrative to consider a question of terminology in the accounts of the following season's campaign. The Iranian rulers applied to the province known in the west as Babylonia (of which the capital at this time was of course no longer Babylon but at the city-complex of Seleucia–Ctesiphon) the name of Asūristān.[2] The term had been transferred from the more northerly region of historical Assyria probably as long ago as the reign of the Achaemenian king Xerxes.[3] In conformity with the current Parthian usage, some western historians used the term "Assyria" as a calque on Asūristān, with reference to Babylonia.[4] Northern Mesopotamia, lately conquered by Trajan, was known to the Iranians as Arabistān, and this was also sometimes rendered by western historians as Arabia – a term more familiar in the west as applying to other regions of Arab population. Moreover, the lands east of the Tigris, situated between the Greater and Lesser Zāb rivers, were in this period correctly known to the western historians as Adiabene (Aramaic Ḥədayab; Parthian Norširakān), but occasionally designated as Assyria in accordance with the obsolete terminology. Difficulties of interpretation arising from such ambiguities have to be watched in reading classical accounts of the expeditions of Trajan and of later Roman generals.

Early in A.D. 116 Trajan marched out of the greatly damaged city of Antioch, and, according to a widely current interpretation of the fragmentary sources, struck across eastwards to the Tigris and forced a crossing on to its eastern bank. This version may arise from the misunderstanding of the term "Assyria", for it was none the less certain that the main Roman thrust in the campaign that followed was along the line of the Euphrates. The triumphal arch found by the excavators of Dura Europos suggests that the emperor in person had passed that way. It was the first occasion on which this caravan city had passed from Parthian into Roman hands. The references to Phalga and Naarda (Nehārdēʿā) in the gazetteer of Stephanus Byzantinus are ascribed to the *Parthica* of Arrian, so these places must have figured as stages in the same march. Modern commentators have been concerned

[1] Honigmann and Maricq, *Recherches sur les "Res gestae divi Saporis"*, p. 162.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 41.
[3] Herodotus III. 92.
[4] Maricq, "La province d' 'Assyrie' créée par Trajan", *Classica et Orientalia*, p. 108.

to discuss whether the Roman plan was to advance along the Tigris, along the Euphrates, or by a two-pronged offensive along both routes at once. It is not clear, if the emperor himself first accompanied the army of the Tigris, how he made his way back to the Euphrates in time to accompany the main force. The objective was Ctesiphon, which lies, of course, east of the Tigris, and could therefore conveniently have been approached by either route. There is no specific mention in the sources of the Royal Canal (Nehar Malkā), but presumably that alignment was followed, since at a certain point it became possible for the boats to be hauled on carts from the "Euphrates" to the Tigris. No reference is made at this stage to Seleucia, but the city was evidently defended by the Parthians, a fact which may account for the difficulty experienced by the Romans in taking their boats all the way by water down to the Tigris.

Whatever the precise plan of campaign, Ctesiphon was captured by Trajan without resistance. The Parthian king Osroes had made good his escape, and the Romans were not only successful in capturing his golden throne, but his daughter too was found amongst the prisoners. It was after this unprecedented success that Trajan received confirmation of the grant to him by the Senate of the title Parthicus. The Roman army then set sail upon the Tigris with a fleet of fifty ships, and sailed down the river to the kingdom of Mesene (Maišān), also known as Characene. The ruler at this time was Attambelos V, who made his submission to Trajan and paid tribute. The Roman frontier had thus been boldly extended from the Euphrates up to the Tigris. For an incredible moment a Roman emperor stood on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and dreamed, like Alexander, of new worlds to conquer. As a traveller will, he watched the ships setting sail for India, and the late writer Jordanes even claims that a statue of the emperor was erected on the shore.[1] The greatest of Roman emperors could hardly have been unaware that beyond the Iranian plateau the Kushān empire was rising to its zenith in Bactria and India, and that its ports could be reached by sea. Yet he must already have guessed that his own days were numbered, and the very speed of his conquests made them insecure. By the time he had reached Babylon on his return up the Euphrates, word arrived that the newly won territories were in general revolt and massacring his garrisons. A special effort had to be made to regain control long enough to effect the retreat of the Roman armies.

[1] Jordanes, *Romana* 268; cf. Debevoise, p. 234.

The general Lucius Quietus captured Nisibis and sacked Edessa. Erucius Clarus and Julius Alexander now for the first time took, and burnt, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. The Parthian forces on the middle Euphrates were commanded by a brother of Osroes named Meherdotes. He fell from his horse and was killed, to be succeeded in the command by his son Sanatruces, who also achieved some successes. Osroes sent a large Parthian army to the aid of Sanatruces under the command of his son Parthamaspates, but discord arose between the two leaders. Parthamaspates was persuaded at a secret meeting with Trajan to attack his cousin, whom he defeated, captured and killed. After this diplomatic success, Trajan assembled the remaining Parthians at Ctesiphon, and invested Parthamaspates with the diadem. This is the event celebrated by the famous Roman coins with the inscription REX PARTHIS DATUS.

In A.D. 117 Trajan at last retreated from Babylonia, following the third of the possible routes northwards, the central route of the Wadi Thartar, which passes the caravan city of Hatra. The fortified, circular city in the heart of the desert had been a pivot of Parthian military resistance. Its mixed populations, Iranian, Arab and Aramaean, were united in devotion to the Arsacid cause. Trajan laid siege to the fortifications, but the barrenness of the surrounding country, the terrible heat and the maddening swarms of flies all added to the hardships of the Roman soldiers. Even when a breach had been made in the walls, several determined attacks failed, and the Roman army was forced to withdraw to their own frontier. By the autumn of A.D. 117 the Romans had not only withdrawn completely from Babylonia, they had even evacuated their troops once more from Dura-Europos. Meanwhile, the health of the emperor Trajan was failing. He had set out on his return to Italy, but died in August at Selinus in Cilicia. His successor, Hadrian, wisely decided to revert to the traditional frontier on the Euphrates.

The successful defence of Hatra against the Romans inaugurated a period of great prosperity for that city. Excavations conducted over a number of years by the Iraq government have revealed a remarkable wealth of temples, sculptures and inscriptions within the walls.[1] Some of the leading personages bear Iranian, Aramaic or even Arab names. That the Parthian influence is strong is made clear by the splendid Parthian costumes of many of the statues, consisting of the typical shirt (*qamīs*) and trousers represented as made from richly ornamented

[1] Cf. D. Homès-Fredericq, *Hatra et ses sculptures Parthes: Étude stylistique et iconographique* (Istanbul, 1963).

materials. The dates of several of the finest sculptures are grouped between Seleucid 444/132 and Seleucid 449/137, and some make mention of a king named Sanatruk (Sinatruces), whom Debevoise sought to link, but inconclusively, with the Parthian general who led resistance to the Romans. However, the king of Hatra is more likely to have been a namesake than a descendant of Trajan's Parthian opponent.

THE LAST CENTURY OF ARSACID RULE

The closing decades of the Parthian empire show a marked diminution in the volume of historical source-material, and consequent reduction of detailed information. The nearest approach to a continuous account is provided by references in the later books of Dio Cassius. There are also occasional brief statements in the *Augustan History*. Naturally such evidence is largely confined to notices of the Roman campaigns, and of Parthian diplomatic exchanges with Rome. The continuing evidence of the Arsacid coinage, and especially its dated issues from the mint of Seleucia, provides a chronological thread, though one by no means free of interruption. The research and discoveries of recent years have added one or two pieces of valuable information, shortly to be examined, but they have also cast grave doubt on an authority of some extent which had previously been accorded general credence. This is the so-called *Chronicle of Arbela*, attributed to a certain Mšiḥa Zkha,[1] which until the last few years was utilized as reliable by leading historians. The hesitations felt as to its worth by Syriac scholars have lately gained emphasis as a result of two critical studies.[2] Their conclusion seems to be that the work in question is a fabrication, compiled indeed by a scholar well informed on the classical and Syriac authors, but that the text is wholly devoid of independent ancient authority. To these criticisms a further point might be added: that where the *Chronicle* offers information additional to that of the ancient sources, none of these details has found confirmation in the more recently discovered *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*. Thus it is probably right to delete information derived from this *Chronicle* from the repertoire of present-day historians of Parthia.

The Parthians did not long endure the turncoat Parthamaspates.

[1] Sachau, "Die Chronik von Arbela", *APAW* 1915, no. 6.

[2] J. Assfalg, "Zur textüberlieferung der Chronik von Arbela", *Oriens Christianus* L (1966), 19–36; J.-M. Fiey, "Auteur et date de la Chronique d'Arbèles", *L'Orient Syrien* XII (1967), 265–302.

He escaped to Roman territory, and was there entrusted with the government of Osroene, the province of Edessa. Once again, the evidence of coins suggests that the Parthian kingdom was divided. Vologeses III was contending against Osroes, and though Hadrian eventually returned to the latter his daughter, in the same year, 128/9, the coinage of Osroes ceased. The next contender with whom Vologeses was faced was Mithradates IV in Iran. The name of the latter is known from the long Parthian legend on the reverse of his coinage. In May A.D. 148 Vologeses III was succeeded by Vologeses IV, whose long reign continued until March A.D. 192. Throughout the reign of Antoninus Pius at Rome, peace prevailed on the Euphrates frontier. Only with the accession of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 161 did the threat of hostilities return. According to the western sources, Vologeses launched the first offensive soon after the new ruler's accession. A Roman army was destroyed at Elegia in Armenia under Severianus, and Parthian forces poured across the Euphrates into Syria, after retaking Edessa. The Romans reacted by concentrating eight legions in Syria under Lucius Verus, the colleague of the emperor. Two expeditionary forces were mustered; the first, under Statius Priscus, swept into Armenia in A.D. 163 and apparently placed one Sohaemus on the throne. In the following year, the second force, under Avidius Cassius, invaded Mesopotamia. Dura-Europos was recaptured, and henceforth remained in Roman hands. An armistice followed, and the Romans marched on to Seleucia, where they were received peacefully. Before long, however, a dispute arose, and in December A.D. 165 the legions stormed and burnt the city. Ctesiphon was also captured, and the palace of Vologeses destroyed.

The inactivity of the Parthians appears to have been partly due to a terrible epidemic of smallpox. The disease, at this time apparently unknown in the west, had been raging for more than a decade in the Kushān territories of India.[1] As a result of the great stimulus that the peace and prosperity of the Antonines had given to world trade, the scourge had spread along the trade routes to southern Arabia, to China, and of course also to Babylonia. During the sack of Seleucia, one of the Roman soldiers contracted the infection. Soon the epidemic was raging amongst the susceptible western soldiery, and the whole invading army was forced to retreat in confusion. The survivors carried the virus with them into the Roman empire, and so began the

[1] Bivar, "Hāritī and the chronology of the Kuṣāṇas", *BSOAS* xxxiii (1970), 20.

"Great Pestilence" that was studied by the physician Galen of Pergamum. Over a quarter of the urban population in some parts of the Roman empire perished, and there is much justification for the historians who believe that this disaster was the greatest single cause of the decline of Roman civilization. Later Roman campaigns against Edessa and Nisibis were accompanied by the added terror of the epidemic. However, as a consequence of the expeditions of A.D. 165 and 166, the Roman frontier was fixed on the line of the Jabal Sinjār, of the Chaboras (Khabur), and of Dura-Europos.

In September A.D. 191 Vologeses IV was replaced by a rival, currently numbered Vologeses V. In the Roman empire a contest for the throne was won by Septimius Severus, who followed his success with a campaign in northern Mesopotamia. Though diverted in A.D. 196 by the rebellion in Gaul of Clodius Albinus, he returned in A.D. 197, and performed the now traditional march down the Euphrates to Seleucia and Babylon. Ctesiphon, which was defended, was once more captured and sacked. In December A.D. 198 he assumed the title Parthicus Maximus; then he retreated, like Trajan, by way of Hatra, which was once more beseiged without avail.

In A.D. 207/8 Vologeses V was succeeded by his son, Vologeses VI. It should be noted that the numbering of rulers with this name is increased by one since Le Rider's discovery of a new Vologeses II. Direct sources are lacking for the history of Parthia during the immediately following years. With the accession of Caracalla as Roman emperor in A.D. 211, plans for a further Roman invasion of Parthia were put in hand. The rulers of Osroene and of Armenia were arrested, and their kingdoms once more annexed as Roman provinces. Not long afterwards a further division took place of the Parthian kingdom. The brother of Vologeses VI established himself as an independent ruler, and he is thus designated Artabanus V.[1] Islamic sources know him as Ardavān. He appears to have been a stronger character than Vologeses VI, and from his seat in Media gained control both of Mesopotamia and in due course of Susa. However, the tetradrachm once ascribed to him by Longpérier is now shown to have been a specimen of Vologeses VI,[2] and no evidence remains that Artabanus V ever gained control of Seleucia. For the accession date of Artabanus

[1] Certain recent writers, including Sellwood (below, p. 280), have eliminated the first Artabanus, so that the last Arsacid ruler becomes Artabanus IV. For the present context, however, it seems clearer to retain the traditional numbering of the last ruler as Artabanus V.

[2] B. Simonetta, "A note on Vologeses V, Artabanus V and Artavasdes", *NC* 1956, p. 80.

precise evidence exists, because of this ruler's historical connection with the religious leader Mānī, who was born on the eighth day of his fifth regnal year. A quotation given by the great Muslim scientist and astronomer al-Bīrūni,[1] runs as follows: "Mānī states in the *Shāpūrakān* that he was born in the year 527 of the astronomers of Babylon, when four years had elapsed of the reign of Ardavān."

The date given here is to be converted according to the Babylonian form of the Seleucid era, so that the birth of Mānī must have occurred in A.D. 216 (527 − 311 = 216). The first year of Ardavān was accordingly the Seleucid year 523, and its Julian equivalent A.D. 212/3 (523 − 311 = 212). A limestone stele discovered at Susa bears a Parthian inscription attesting the rule there of Artabanus V only three years later, in the Arsacid year 462, equivalent to A.D. 215 (462 − 247 = 215).[2] The stone commemorates a certain Khwasak, satrap of Susa, and that the king in question is indeed Artabanus V is made certain by the fact that he is depicted wearing a forked beard, which appears also on some of the drachmae issued by this king.[3]

Caracalla, who claimed to have inspired the rivalry between Vologeses VI and Artabanus V, now began to concentrate Roman forces in Syria. He demanded the return of a runaway philosopher, Antiochus, and of Tiridates, perhaps an Armenian prince, on threat of war. Artabanus, however, avoided a crisis by returning the refugees. In A.D. 216 Caracalla, then resident at Antioch, sent a request to marry the daughter of Artabanus V. He may have planned to secure a claim to the Parthian succession, and to find a pretext for invasion if his suit were refused. Again Artabanus eventually agreed, and the emperor made a state visit to the Parthian court. Finally, according to the rather unreliable historical tradition, the Romans during the celebrations attacked the unsuspecting Parthians, and slaughtered many, though Artabanus made good his escape. Then the Roman army ravaged a large part of Media, captured the city of Arbela, and, so it is said, broke open the Parthian royal tombs and scattered the bones. While Artabanus retreated into the mountains to gather fresh forces, Caracalla was murdered on the road from Edessa to Carrhae. When Macrinus succeeded in A.D. 217 the Parthians invaded Mesopotamia, and defeated the Romans near Nisibis.

In the end, it was not to the Romans, for all their onslaughts, but

[1] Honigmann and Maricq, *Recherches sur les 'Res gestae divi Saporis'*, p. 31; Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya*, ed. E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1876–8), p. 208.

[2] Henning, "The monuments and inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak", *Asia Major* II (1952), 176.

[3] Cf. p. 96, below.

to the new Iranian dynasty of the Sasanians that the Arsacid empire was to succumb. Ardashīr I, the dynamic heir to the kingdom of Persis, had subdued the neighbouring principalities, and aspired to overthrow his Arsacid overlord. According to the brief account of Dio Cassius, Artaxerxes (Ardashīr) fought altogether three battles against the Parthian, in all of which he was victorious. Neither the place nor the date of the final encounter, the celebrated battle of Hormizdagān, are yet precisely established, but the recent suggestion of Professor Widengren, that the battle took place north-west of Iṣfahān, on the route to Hamadān,[1] brings an interesting new point into the discussion. On this hypothesis, the encounter will have been close to the site of the Hellenistic battle between Eumenes and Antigonus in 317 B.C. Ṭabarī relates that in the final cavalry charge, Ardashīr slew Ardavān, his son Shāpūr slew the Parthian vizier, and the Persian page another Parthian opponent; and most authorities agree that the rock-sculptures of the Tang-Āb gorge near Fīrūzābād in Fārs depict this scene. Meanwhile at the mint of Seleucia Vologeses VI continued to issue his dated tetradrachm coinage until A.D. 222/3, thus reigning simultaneously with Artabanus.[2] There exist, however, at least two specimens of a tetradrachm issue apparently in all respects identical with those of Vologeses, but bearing the Seleucid date 539/A.D. 228/9. This date is usually placed after the final triumph of Ardashīr, and it is difficult at first sight to explain how a coinage of Vologeses VI could have been issued at Seleucia at such a late date. Earlier writers, following a suggestion of Longpérier, believed that the effigy on this coin showed a royal portrait with a forked beard, and must thus depict Artavasdes (Ardavazd), a son of Artabanus V. In his recent article, Simonetta has shown that the suggestion of a forked beard on the tetradrachm is no more than an illusion. In any event, coins with this feature are to be ascribed rather to Artabanus V than to Artavasdes.[3]

The only possible explanation of the latest Parthian tetradrachm seems thus to be that some sort of short-lived counter-revolution in favour of the Arsacids, and against the Sasanian conquerors, took place at Seleucia in A.D. 228/9. Whether Vologeses VI was still actually alive, or whether his coin-type was used posthumously, is at present uncertain. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that this remarkable episode

[1] *La Persia nel Medioevo*, pp. 739 ff.
[2] Simonetta, "Vologeses V, Artabanus V and Artavasdes", p. 81.
[3] [Cf. Sellwood, p. 298, below.]

in Parthian history took place in exactly the same year as that of another decisive event in the career of the prophet Mānī. For according to al-Bīrūnī, Mānī received his first religious revelation, in his thirteenth year, and in the year 539 "of the astronomers of Babylon", which is the same as 539 of the Seleucid era. Mānī claimed to be a descendant of a Parthian princely family; and his syncretic religious doctrine, containing elements of Mandaean belief, Iranian cosmogony, and even echoes of Christianity, may be regarded as a typical reflection of the mixed religious doctrines of the late Arsacid period, which the Zoroastrian orthodoxy of the Sasanians was soon to sweep away. The new creed can in some senses be visualized as a monument to the memory of the vanished dynasty, and it appears that several of the Sasanian kings regarded Mānī as a source of danger to their line. It may thus be admissible to speculate that a connection existed between the abortive Arsacid restoration at Seleucia in A.D. 228/9 and the revelation which descended upon the youthful Mānī at that time. The young prophet may well have been impressed at this desperate attempt to restore the ancient dynasty, and have then resolved to found a worldwide movement which would reassert Arsacid values in the spiritual sphere. Many years were to pass before the new creed was expounded in developed form, but Manichaeism can be seen as one of the last manifestations of Arsacid thought, its tinge of profound pessimism related to that dynasty's loss of power. At the same time, the Manichaean scriptures have preserved to modern times, amongst their rich and varied linguistic heritage, evidence for the vocabulary and pronunciation of the Parthian language. These features are masked in the official Arsacid script by its complex ideographic writing system. In Babylonia, therefore, Manichaeism appears as the last heir of the Parthian tradition, though Armenia too preserved its legacy of Arsacid influence.

Appendix I. Chronological Table of the Arsacid Kings of Parthia

B.C.	New chronology	B.C.	Old chronology	B.C.	
247	Arsacid era begins	c. 250	Arsaces (Aršaka;		SELEUCIDS
	Andragoras autonomous as satrap		Parth. *'ršk*)		
246	Arsaces I leads revolt in N. Parthia	c. 248	Tiridates I (Tīridāta)	246	Death of Antiochus II
238	Arsaces I in control of Parthia			228	Seleucus II invades Parthia
217 or 214	Arsaces II	211	Artabanus I (Artapāna;	223	Antiochus III
			Parth. *'rtbnw*)	209	Eastern campaign of Antiochus III
c. 191	Phriapites, Priapatius (Parth. *pryptk*)		[*Agreed chronology*]	187	Seleucus IV
c. 176	Phraates I (Frahāta; Parth. *prdt*)			175	Antiochus IV Epiphanes
c. 171	Mithradates I (Mithradāta: Parth. *mtrdt*)			165	Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Iran
148/7	Mithradates takes Ecbatana (Hamadān)			164	Antiochus IV dies at Isfahan
c. 139/8	Phraates II	138/7	Phraates II		Timarchus at Hamadan
c. 127	Artabanus I	c. 128	Artabanus II	162	Demetrius I
c. 124/3	Mithradates II	c. 123	Mithradates II	150	Alexander Balas
c. 90	Gotarzes I (Godarz; Parth. *gwtrz*)	c. 91	Gotarzes I	145	Demetrius II
	Orodes I	80	Orodes I	141	Demetrius II captured by the
78 or 77	Sinatruces	76/7 ∞	Sinatruces		Parthians in Media
71 or 70	Phraates III	58/7	Mithradates III	139	Antiochus VII Sidetes
58/7	Orodes II (Urūd/Vīroy: Parth. *wrwd*;	c. 57	Orodes II	129	Antiochus VII invades Media
	Pahl. *wyrwd*, *wylwd-*)				and is killed in battle
before 53	Mithradates III (struck coins at Seleucia)				
c. 39	Pacorus I	38	Death of Pacorus I		END OF SELEUCID RULE IN
	Death of Pacorus I				IRAN AND BABYLONIA
	Death of Orodes II				
c. 40	Phraates IV		Phraates IV		
	32–30 Invasion by Tiridates		30–25 Tiridates II		
	27/6 Tiridates strikes coins at Seleucia				
3/2	Phraataces (Phraates V)				

A.D.	New chronology	A.D.	Old chronology
		Commencement of Christian era	
5/6	Orodes III issues tetradrachms at Seleucia.	4	Orodes III
8/9	Vonones I	7/8	Vonones I
10/11	Artabanus II (Ardavān; Parth. *'rtbnw*; Pahl. *'rtw'n*)	12	Artabanus III
36	Tiridates II (no coins) (Tirdād; Parth. *tyrydt*)	36	Tiridates III
37	Cinnamus (no coins)	37	Cinnamus
39–45	Vardanes (Parth. *wrdn*; Pahl. *wrd'n*)	38	Gotarzes II
43/4–50/1	Gotarzes II	39–47/8	Vardanes
50/1–76/7	Vologeses I	*c.* 51	Vonones II
or 79	(Parth. *wlgšy*)	51/2–79/80	Vologeses I
	55 Vardanes II		
77/8–78/9	Vologeses II		
77/8–86/7	Pacorus II	78–115/6	Pacorus II
79/80–80/1	Artabanus III	80–1	Artabanus IV
92/3–95/6	Pacorus II		
104/5–107/8	Vologeses III	105/6–147	Vologeses II
108/9–127/8	Osroes (Khusrau)	109/10–128/9	Osroes
–*c.* 110	Pacorus II		
111/12–46/7	Vologeses III		
	117 Parthamaspates (no coins)	117	Parthamaspates
c. 130–147	Mithradates IV (not at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris)	128/9–147?	Mithradates IV
147/8–190/1	Vologeses IV	148–192	Vologeses III
190/1–207/7	Vologeses V	191–207/8	Vologeses IV
207/8–221/2	Vologeses VI	207/8–222/3	Vologeses V
c. 213–*c.* 224	Artabanus IV (not at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris)	*c.* 213–*c.* 224	Artabanus V
		c. 227–228/9	Artavasdes

CHAPTER 3

IRANIANS IN ASIA MINOR

A fragment by an Athenian tragedian of the late 5th or early 4th centuries speaks of maidens from Lydia and Bactria together, worshipping the Tmolian goddess Artemis to the sound of a flute, welcoming the deity like a guest with a Persian melody.[1] The Tmolian goddess is most likely Anaitis, often referred to as the Persian Artemis, since Hypaipa, one of the centres of worship of Anaitis in Lydia, lay on the slopes of Mount Tmolus.[2] Bactria, at the other end of the dominions of the Achaemenians on the Oxus, was also an important centre of the worship of Anaitis. Poets in Athens and presumably individuals in Lydia imagined Lydian maidens worshipping the same goddess as maidens at the end of the inhabited world. Thinking this way meant fitting local customs and even local thoughts into a wider whole which may have been perceived as in some sense living – organization was not merely a matter of roads and fast postal service. The deities of the Persians ranged throughout the dominions of the Achaemenians. Darius in the Bīsitūn inscription refers often to his rule's relation to Ahuramazda. This sense of belonging to a whole, which stretched to the ends of the inhabited world, also finds expression in the custom of Persians of sacrificing for the king and for all Persians but not for themselves (Herodotus I. 131).

The appearance of the Persian goddess Anāhitā in Asia Minor represents part of a change taking place throughout the dominions of the Achaemenians, not the introduction of something traditionally Iranian into new territories. The worship of Anāhitā appeared everywhere within the empire at about the same time, probably on the initiative of the Achaemenians in the late 5th and early 4th centuries. Berossus says Artaxerxes II (404–358 B.C.) had cult statues of Anāhitā put up in Sardis, Babylon, Damascus, Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, and Bactria – a statement confirmed for most of these cities by independent evidence. The Anāhitā cult probably represents a fundamental change in Iranian religion. For Anāhitā is the first and only Iranian goddess depicted for

[1] A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. 2 (Leipzig, 1889), 776–7; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* XIV 38 (636); tr. C. D. Yonge, vol. III (London, 1854), 1015–16.

[2] For the unsuccessful attempt to locate the shrines of Anaitis at Hypaipa and Sardis, see G. Hanfmann, *From Croesus to Constantine* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1975), p. 17.

purposes of cult. Ahuramazda is depicted earlier in the 5th century reliefs, but this is for the purposes of narrative, not worship. Anāhitā worship is often found in association with temples. Berossus himself does not say specifically that the images of the goddess were exhibited in temples, but later sources speak of Anāhitā in a temple. The fire ritual too appears in its distinctive form at about the same time and often enough in connection with Anāhitā to argue a relationship. Earlier reliefs show the Great King praying to Ahuramazda before a flaming altar. Later, the Great King appears on coins without Ahuramazda, dressed in the costume of a fire priest and praying directly to a fire.[1] Herodotus (I. 131–2) appears to confirm the date of these changes as being late in the 5th or in the 4th century, for he says the Persians had neither temples nor cult images of the gods. Further, he mentions neither Anāhitā nor the distinctive fire worship, although he does say the Persians regard natural phenomena like wind, fire, water, the sun, the earth as holy.

Artaxerxes II's decision to give one of the Iranian gods tangible form may have been a response to the Greeks, who commonly represented their gods in cult images; as Herodotus (I. 135) remarks, the Persians did not fear to learn from others. The aim may also have been simply to direct the attention of Iranians and non-Iranians throughout the Achaemenian dominions to the Persian gods. But in a sense this strengthening and unfolding of Iranianism, almost of Iranian consciousness – for that is what Persian gods mean – brought with it, at least in western Asia Minor, a strengthening of Hellenism as well as Iranianism, since the visual language in which the goddess Anāhitā was portrayed was Greek. Thus she is often difficult to distinguish from Artemis and has to be qualified as the Persian Artemis. It was almost as if the Greeks had made at least one of the gods of the Persians visible. There is an epitaph from north-east Caria which invokes the gods of the Greeks and the Persians, Θεοὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Περσῶν.[2]

In fact, this is true in a more general sense. One cannot speak about the Iranians in Asia Minor without speaking about the Greeks, that is without understanding what Greeks and Persians had in common, for they were enemies who respected each other. Respecting your enemies means experiencing what you have in common with them as well as your differences. We think of *hubris* as a typically Greek conception, but

[1] S. Wikander, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran* (Lund, 1946), especially 52–101.
[2] L. and J. Robert, *La Carie* (Paris, 1954), 79.

Aeschylus and Herodotus assumed the Persians knew hubris, and they could thus treat Persian outrages, such as Xerxes' treatment of the dead body of Leonidas (Herodotus VII. 238), as outrages, and not as actions inherently Persian. Aeschylus set *Persae* at Ecbatana, and saw and had his audience see the Greek victory through the eyes of the Persians.[1] The Greeks also sensed that monarchy (not necessarily the monarchy of the Achaemenians) was as much rooted in the nature of things as was the *polis*, "the self-governing community of free, landowning citizens equal before the law".

As a result of this experience of what they did and did not have in common, much of what we know about Persia and almost everything we know about Iranians in Asia Minor comes from Greek sources. For in an important sense, and with the exception of the Great King, the Persians did not speak: they rode, they shot, and they did not tell lies, which meant that they kept their promises of obedience to their superiors. The Greeks were fascinated and astonished by the outlandish grandeur of the Persians, with its successes and failures, but they also sensed in it a pathetic quality and saw its extraordinary tendency to entangle all but the best of the Persians in illusion and self-destruction. They learned this from Herodotus in the gathering storm of the Peloponnesian war. It helped to open their eyes to their own extravagance, which, though different, was as self-destructive as that of the Persians.

Lydia with its fertile plains in the Hermus Valley and the important city of Sardis, at which the Royal Road ended, was an important centre of Persian influence in Asia Minor. In addition to the sanctuary in Hypaipa, there were sanctuaries of Anaitis in Hierakome (renamed Hierocaesareia in the 1st century A.D.) and Philadelphia. The Hyrcanian plain, which according to Strabo (XIII. 4. 13) took its name from Persian settlers brought from Hyrcania, and the plain of Cyrus, both near Sardis, betoken Persian settlements in the area, an area later to be settled by Macedonian soldiers. Pontus and Lydia appear to be the chief centres for the worship of the Persian gods in Asia Minor. As late as the 2nd century A.D., Pausanias (5. 27. 5–7) could report witnessing something resembling the Persian fire ceremony at Hierocaesareia and Hypaipa.

In the north-west, on the south-eastern edge of Lake Manyas near

[1] A. D. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom, The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge, 1975), especially 123–50.

Ergeli, the site of Dascylion, the satrap's palace, has recently been identified.[1] In his description of the site in antiquity, Xenophon (*Hellenica* IV. I. 15–16) wondered at the number of villages around it. He also mentions a hunting park (*παράδεισος*) and remarks on the abundance of wildlife outside as well as within. Apparently these parks, which left their mark on the memories of the natives, turned a traditional part of the Iranian way of life into a convention, just as the 19th-century parks of Frederick Law Olmsted in the United States carefully re-evoked the wilderness. The Iranian aristocracy apparently preferred hunting and riding in special preserves rather than in the open country. For them hunting and riding were no longer an economic necessity but a way of defining themselves. In some sense, they saw the basis of their nobility and authority in swiftness of movement – skill in horsemanship and archery like that of their ancestors – and in loyalty to their superiors. With no city (in the Greek sense) nearby, this palace and hunting park surrounded by villages must have looked to the Iranians like Persia in miniature – a copy on a small scale of a world made up not of cities but of palaces and villages and occasional city-like agglomerations.

Several important reliefs of the 4th and 5th century have been found in the neighbourhood of Dascylion. One of them, a tombstone, appears to offer a view into the hunting park described by Xenophon: a Persian nobleman riding at full gallop is about to spear a boar.[2] He wears the long, close-fitting pants and the long-sleeved tunic and tiara (hat) which identify the Persian nobleman in Greek art before Alexander. The most important of these reliefs shows the Magi or Π*ύραιθοι*, the fire-kindlers, at the fire ritual, perhaps about to sacrifice.[3] Four hundred years older than Strabo's (XV. 3. 15) description of the fire ritual, the relief appears to have been made to illustrate it. It shows two figures with their mouths and jaws covered by the tiara, which

[1] E. Akurgal, "Les fouilles de Daskyleion", *Anatolia* I (1956), 20–4; *Die Kunst Anatoliens* (Berlin, 1961), 167–77; H. Bengston, *The Greeks and the Persians* (New York, 1968), pp. 187, 192, 208.

[2] From Çavuch Koi, near Panderma. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, number 1054. F. W. Hasluck, *JHS* XXVI (1906), 26, pl. VI.

[3] From Eregli. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul. T. Macridy, "Reliefs Gréco-Perses de la Région de Dascylion", *BCH* XXXVII (1913), 340–57; R. Ghirshman, *Persia from the origins to Alexander the Great* (London, 1964), 347, fig. 440. For the three steles recently discovered at Dascylion, see E. Akurgal, "Griechisch-persische Reliefs aus Daskyleion", *IA* VI (1966), pp. 147–56; P. Bernard, "Les bas-reliefs gréco-perses de Dascylion à la lumière de nouvelles découvertes", *Revue Archéologique* 1969, pp. 17–28; J. M. Dentzer, "Reliefs au 'Banquet' dans l'Asie Mineure du Ve siècle av J.-C.", *ibid.*, pp. 195–224.

Strabo describes as long enough to reach down to the jaws and cover the lips. It is difficult to tell whether they are holding clubs, which Strabo says they use for sacrifice in Cappadocia, or sacred bundles of twigs (*barsman*). The reliefs on three additional grave steles found recently at Dascylion also betray a Persian ambience: eight-spoked wheels with nails on the edges as at Persepolis; long chitons instead of the short chitons of Greek servants; dressed cup-bearers instead of the naked Greek cup-bearers; more servants; a woman wearing the headdress reserved for Persian royalty. Also and more importantly, for it shows the contrast between a monarchical and aristocratic world, funeral banquets on these stones centre on one individual, not on the groups of diners as in contemporary Greek work.

Another reflection of Persia in miniature appears on a relief from the tomb of an Iranian prince or governor of the most important city in Lycia, Xanthus. The Harpy Tomb (now at the British Museum) shows a Greek–Lycian version of audiences depicted at Persepolis. Instead of a miniaturized official before the Great King as at Persepolis, a boy offers a cock and a rhyton of wine to the enthroned governor.[1] Common to Greeks, Lycians, and Persians, this ritual gesture of offering had a different significance for each. All saw the same thing and understood it differently – but not differently enough to be unaware that there were other ways of understanding what they saw. For a Greek the scene might depict the worship of a hero; for a Persian, an audience before the Persian governor of Xanthus, faintly reminiscent of the audiences before the Great King in Persepolis. These portrayals of Persia on a small scale reflect in their physical dispositions the spiritual ideal of maintaining promises of obedience to superiors; everyone expected from those below him what he granted those above him. Greek craftsmen appear to have done all this work for Persian patrons – with the exception of objects found in graves and seal rings (impressions of many of which were found at Dascylion), which are of Persian manufacture.

Wall paintings in two tombs recently discovered (1969) on the edges of Lycia in the Plain of Elmali, the first of about 525 B.C., the second of the early 5th century, tell something more about Greek eyes witnessing a Lycian world coming to know the presence of Persia. The first

[1] F. J. Tritsch, "The Harpy Tomb at Xanthus", *JHS* LXII (1942), 39–50; G. Rodenwalt, "Griechische Reliefs in Lykien", *SPAW* 1933, pp. 1028–35; I. Kleemann, "Der Satrapen-Sarkophag aus Sidon", *Istanbuler Forschungen* XX (Berlin, 1958), pp. 111–14.

betrays not a hint of Persia; the second, roughly a generation later, shows a reclining man drawn with wondrous clarity and daring, probably not an important Persian official, but nevertheless with something distinctly Persian about him. His servants approach him carrying vessels of the same sort and in the same way as the tributaries on the stairways at the Apadana at Persepolis, but their hands unmistakably betray Greek eyes. Elsewhere in the frieze the individual wears the tiara, long purple pants and a long-sleeved tunic which, whatever else it is, is not Greek. There is a battle scene full of movement and clarity in which Greeks are losing to Persians, or to Lycians who affect Persian styles. Greek artists could paint their own defeat as if it were the defeat of others.

In Lydia, where Sardis was the site of the most important Persian satrapy, there are fewer visual traces of the Persians than in the region about Lake Manyas and in Lycia. Only items connected with dress and court life remain: jewelry, gold, silver, glass vessels, rich cloths. There is also a pediment in Greek style, of the middle of the 5th century B.C., showing the funeral banquet of a Persian. (Mesopotamian but probably not Persian, the motif of the funeral banquet seems to have won currency among Persians and people associated with Persian administration in Asia Minor, for it appears on one of the recently found reliefs at Dascylion.) Concentrating on organization, roads and horse relays, and living apart from the natives, the Persians appear to have been content to let others depict them.[1]

For the Persians in Asia Minor, as perhaps everywhere, the fall of Achaemenians meant crisis. Even in areas such as Caria, far from the beaten tracks of armies and merchants and enjoying relative independence from Persia, the Iranian aristocracy had to come to terms with the new circumstances. In the little polis of Amyzon high up in the mountains of north-west Caria, a decree from the time of Philip Arrhidaeus, half-brother and successor of Alexander, adopts a man called Bagadates and his son, Arieramnes, as citizens and on the advice of the oracle at Delphi, appoints Bagadates priest of the local indigenous

[1] For the two tombs in the plain of Elmali, see M. J. Mellink, "The painted tomb near Elmali", *American Journal of Archaeology* LXXIV (Baltimore, Md., 1970), pp. 251–53; "Excavations at Elmali, 1971", *ibid.* LXXVI (1972), pp. 263–69; "Excavations at Elmali, 1972, *ibid.* LXXVII (1973), pp. 297–303; "Notes on Anatolian wall painting", in *Mélanges Mansel* I (Ankara, 1974), pp. 537–47. For Lydia, see J. Boardman, "Pyramidal Stamp Seals in the Persian Empire", *Iran* VIII (1970), pp. 19–45; G. M. A. Hanfmann, "A pediment of the Persian Era from Sardis", in *Mélanges Mansel* I, pp. 289–302; *From Croesus to Constantine*, pp. 1–21, esp. 15–21.

goddess who is called Artemis. The priesthood was apparently hereditary, for about a hundred and twenty years later a decree (of the time of Antiochus III) mentions an Arieramnes as priest of the local Artemis. These are Iranian names. In this instance, an Iranian aristocratic family won citizenship in a Greek polis and at the same time gained an official position as priests of a sanctuary.[1] In Apamea on the Meander a man called Maiphernes appears as an official of the mint sometime in the next centuries.[2] Here, too, a descendant of the Iranian aristocracy had continued to play an official rôle. However in some cities in north-eastern Caria Iranian names scattered among the local population appear to indicate that the descendants of Persian settlers had in the generations become integrated with the local population.[3]

In the perspective of the Trojan War and earlier which Asia Minor suggested to him, Strabo minimized the differences between the Achaemenian and Macedonian conquests of Asia Minor; but they were in important ways different. The dominion of the Achaemenians lasted two hundred and fifty-years; Alexander's lasted much less than his short life and did not extend beyond it. In the Bīsitūn inscription, Darius had spoken loftily of his ability to overcome usurpers in the strength of Ahuramazda. Alexander's conquest provoked instability, even a revolutionary atmosphere[3] robbers sacked the tomb of Cyrus at Persepolis when Alexander was absent in India; the suspicion and insecurity was such that men wondered whether the satraps had violated the tomb (Strabo xv. 3. 7).

After the death of Alexander, the Macedonians turned upon themselves. From the outermost parts of Iran, Greek commanders came to the battle grounds in Asia Minor. In contrast to Alexander, who had not been able to ensure his succession, the Persians had lived under a hereditary monarchy and esteemed legitimacy of descent – a fact which Strabo thought worthy of mention (xv. 3. 17).

One of the most important consequences of this confusion was the emergence (about 305 B.C.) of two independent monarchies, one in Cappadocia and the other in Pontus, which claimed and were believed by their subjects to be descended from the Achaemenians. The mere existence of these monarchies testifies to the depth of the Iranization which had occurred under the Achaemenians. Instead of adapting

[1] L. Robert, "Le sanctuaire d'Artémis à Amyzon", *CRAI* 1953, 403–15.

[2] L. Robert, *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie-Mineure gréco-romaine* I (Paris, 1963), 348–9.

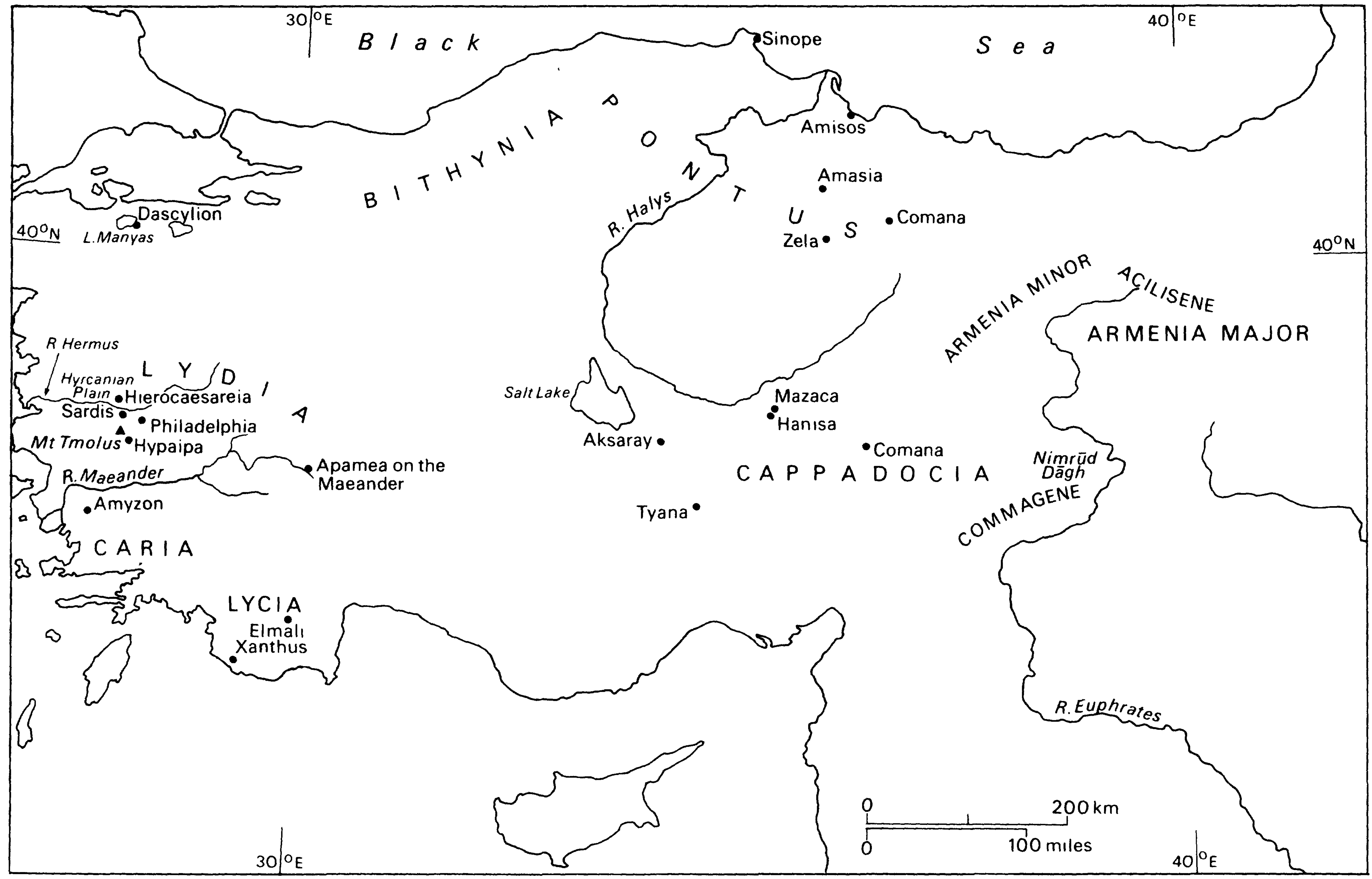
[3] Robert, *La Carie*, 79.

themselves to changed circumstances, like the Iranians in Caria and probably throughout western Asia Minor, the Iranian aristocracy east of the Halys River in Pontus and Cappadocia chose independence in defiance of the Macedonians. The Cappadocians had resisted from the beginning. After the defeat of the Persian satraps on the River Granicus, the Cappadocians fought at Arbela in 331. Unlike Sinope and Amisos on the coast of Pontus, they did not come to terms with Alexander after this battle but rose up in his rear.

Until the fall of the Persian monarchy, the Iranian presence had probably been as intense in Asia Minor west of the Halys as it had been in Pontus and Cappadocia. With the victory of Alexander and the emergence of the Hellenistic kings, it begins slowly to fade in the west. Writing in the time of Augustus, Strabo only knew of traces of the Persians in western Asia Minor, but he considered Cappadocia almost a living part of Persia (xv. 3. 15).

Iranization in Pontus and Cappadocia meant the preservation of great temple estates which had in many instances existed before the arrival of the Medes in the early 6th century. Comana in Pontus had, for instance, been a holy region in the time of the Hittites. The past, not only the Iranian past but the past of the first millennium before the coming of the Medes in the early 6th century and even of the late 2nd millennium, rose before one's eyes in these lands. Strabo's descriptions of the temple estates are full of wonder and astonishment. Even though they must have been part of his boyhood knowledge – for he was from Amasia in Pontus – he did not take them for granted and found himself (xi. 14. 16) turning to Herodotus' description of temple prostitution to understand the customs at the temples of Pontus, Cappadocia, and Armenia. He speaks of Cappadocia as having many temples of the Persian gods and many fire priests. But it is important to remember that there were other religious centres in Cappadocia and Pontus, many of them of greater antiquity than those of Anaitis. In these regions where there were few cities (except those cut off from the interior on the coasts of Pontus) these sanctuaries served as centres; pilgrims came to them from everywhere throughout Cappadocia and Pontus and from Armenia – betraying the deeper unity of regions recently divided politically.

In regard to those temples which owned large estates – Strabo (xii. 2. 3) speaks of more than six thousand temple servants at Comana in Cappadocia – it is often difficult to distinguish the Iranian element



Map 2. Iranians in Asia Minor.

from the indigenous. Even in the instance of temple prostitution, usually associated with either indigenous or Semitic influence, Wikander points out that it is not by any means clear that Iranian ritual excludes it.[1]

In each of the Comanas, Strabo refers to the chief priest as "second after the king" (Strabo XII. 2.3; 3.32; Caesar, *De bello Alexandrino* 66), adding in the case of Comana in Cappadocia that he usually came from the royal family. Found most frequently in Latin and Greek authors, these words, in appearance a mere phrase, actually are a translation of an Iranian title in use among the Sasanians, the Parthians, and the Achaemenians. Under the Achaemenians, they designated the heir of the king, later probably simply those who were second in authority to the king. All this would appear to argue Iranian influence on the shrine of the national goddess of Cappadocia, Ma.[2] In the second millennium in a region later called Pontus, however, a Hittite king used the title when he consecrated his son Priest of Tesup.[3]

Unlike many of the other holy centres in these regions which had been sacred for centuries, Zela appears to have been consecrated for the first time as a sanctuary of the Persian gods, especially Anaitis, by Artaxerxes II. By Strabo's time, it had long been a temple with authority over much land and many holy servants (*ἱερόδουλοι*). With rites of surpassing holiness, it exercised spiritual authority throughout Pontus; men came from everywhere to make oaths on matters of crucial importance in the sanctuary of the Persian gods at Zela (Strabo XII. 3. 37). That the Persian gods guaranteed men's words says something for the moral authority of the Achaemenians and their gods in Pontus and Cappadocia. The priests of these sanctuaries acted with great independence. In the time of the independent kings of Cappadocia the Priest of Comana also bore the title of general (*στρατηγός*) and governor of the King.[4]

Besides the sanctuaries at Zela and in Armenia in Acilisene (modern Ekeleac), Anaitis probably held other sanctuaries with land and temple servants in Cappadocia and Pontus. A recently published inscription points to the existence of such a sanctuary in the area of Cappadocia south-east of the Salt Lake, forty or fifty kilometres north of Aksaray

[1] Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, 88–9.

[2] E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en Iranien ancien* (Paris, 1966), especially 50–65; H. Volkmann, "Der Zweite nach dem König", *Philologus* XCII (1937), 285–316.

[3] E. Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire* (Wiesbaden, 1968), 110.

[4] Dittenberger I. 573 (no. 364).

(ancient Archelais). Flavia Prima dedicates to the most powerful goddess, Anaitis Barzochora, three individuals and their heirs as temple servants for life. One of the newly dedicated servants bears an indigenous name.[1]

The hereditary status of much temple service helps to explain its persistence. The authority that these shrines exerted was spiritual rather than legal; for violations they threatened death or disease to the desecrator or his livestock. The status of the temple servants differed importantly from that of Greek slaves. Antiochus of Commagene forbade any priest or magistrate or dynast (meaning probably the Iranian aristocracy) from enslaving or maltreating or exacting liturgies from the temple servants and their heirs.[2] When Pompey (Strabo XII. 3. 34) appointed a priest-governor of the sanctuary at Comana in Pontus with authority over other adjoining lands, he expressly forbade the sale of the temple servants. In addition to such guarantees against abuse from magistrates of cities, priests, and barons, the temple servants could, unlike slaves in Greece, hold land either by renting sacred land or through sharecropping agreements. Since their status was beyond the law, it depended to some extent on the spiritual authority of the shrine and its spiritual sanctions. Such arrangements were meant to last for ever; that is why the status of temple servants at Commagene was conceived as exceptional.

The primary unit throughout the Achaemenian dominions was the village. Posidonius observed (Strabo XI. 9. 1) that there were two thousand villages in Rhagae in Media. Classical authors spoke of ten thousand cities in Bactria, but Soviet excavations show these cities to be armed villages.[3] These villages were gathered into groups for taxation purposes. Such village organization was also characteristic of Asia Minor, especially of Pontus and Cappadocia in the Achaemenian period, and persisted in the Hellenistic period. A large part of Asia Minor remained without cities in the Hellenistic period. In Pontus there were few cities except on the coast. In Cappadocia there were three cities: Tyana, Mazaca, and Hanisa. When kings travelled about their countries

[1] J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique* 1968 (vol. VI, Paris, 1972), number 538, pp. 108–10.

[2] L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* I, number 1 (Nemrud Dagh) (Paris, 1929), 155–90, 205–12; P. Debord, "L'esclavage sacré: état de la question", in *Actes du colloque* 1971 *sur l'esclavage* (Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, vol. 140, Paris, 1972), 135–50.

[3] E. J. Bickerman, "The Seleucids and the Achaemenids", in *La Persia e il Mondo Greco-Romano* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome 1966), 87–117, especially 104.

they stayed in fortified places. Appian (*De bello Mithridatico* 65) reports that Murena destroyed four hundred villages in one raid. The fertile plain outside Amasia was called the plain of a thousand villages.[1] Many of these villages had their own sanctuaries. As Libanius put it (*Pro templis* 9), "Destroy the sanctuary of a village and it grows blind and lives no more."[2]

In the time of the Achaemenians, two things of importance happened in Pontus: an Iranian aristocracy and the Persian gods entered the land, and the Greek cities were founded along the coast. In the Hellenistic centuries, both the process of Iranization and Hellenization continued in different ways in both Cappadocia and Pontus. In Cappadocia, Hellenization started slowly in the 3rd century and quickened in the 2nd. In Cappadocia the first coinage under Ariarathes, who ruled while Alexander was still alive, was in Aramaic, the imperial language of the Achaemenians. But already in the long reign of Ariaramnes (about 280–230 B.C.) the first coinage appears with Greek inscriptions, showing the monarch in Persian dress.[3]

Different from what had occurred in the 5th and 4th centuries in western Asia Minor, where Persian and Greek elements almost fused, as in the Tomb of the Harpy at Xanthus, this juxtaposition of Greece and Persia is characteristic of the whole of life in the independent monarchies. The organization of the state and its titles in Cappadocia and Pontus were modelled after those of the Hellenistic monarchies.[4] The Greek of the chancelleries was as good as that anywhere else; but the kings and the aristocracy probably still thought in Persian or in the local languages. Mithridates Eupator, who had been brought up in Greek, sought to learn all the languages spoken in his kingdom, in itself enough to do away with the notion that he was a Greek king.[5]

Under the Seleucids the Greek élite and the Iranian aristocracy and the local notables lived side by side in two different worlds that had little to do with each other.[6] But in Cappadocia, in Pontus, in Com-

[1] P. Briant: "Villages et communautés villageoises d'Asie achéménide et hellénistique", *JESHO* XVIII (1975), 165–88; "'Brigandage', dissidence et conquête en Asie achéménide et hellénistique", in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* (Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, vol. 188, Paris, 1976), 163–262.

[2] T. Zawadzki, "Quelques remarques sur l'étendue et l'accroissement des domaines des grands temples en Asie Mineure", *Eos* XLVI, 1 (1954), 83–96.

[3] K. Regling, "Dynastenmünzen von Tyana, Morima und Anisa in Kappadokien", *ZN* XLII (1935), 1–23.

[4] [See also pp. 12ff., 713 and 821ff. on Hellenism in Iran.]

[5] T. Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator* (Paris, 1890), 282.

[6] Bickerman, "Seleucids and Achaemenids", 103.

magene, and in Parthia, whose kings attended performances of the *Bacchae*, one has the sense that the men who inherited the responsibilities of leadership lived in both the Greek and the Iranian world, just as they spoke and thought in both languages – unlike the Greeks, who did not learn foreign languages.

These rulers needed Greek and Hellenism in order to be independent kings rather than chiefs, and to enter the world of international politics. They needed Persian and the local languages in order to remember who they were, that is to survive. They went from one world to the other but did not entertain illusions they could do without either or that the two worlds could meet and amalgamate.

In some sense, the real drama of the Hellenistic world occurred among those rulers who had resisted Macedonian dominion. As with so many other things, it took the Roman Republic to bring this drama to ripeness; it was from these kings, not from the Hellenistic kings, that there came the last men who dared stand up to the Roman Republic before she destroyed herself, Mithridates Eupator of Pontus and Orodes of Parthia.

Neither Cappadocia nor Pontus were lands which attracted Greek and Macedonian settlers. Greeks were city men; they did not move into the country. As a result, Hellenization in lands like Pontus and Cappadocia meant the natives Hellenized themselves. There is an inscription perhaps from the 2nd century B.C. from Hanisa near Mazaca in Cappadocia. This is clearly a Greek polis with a constitution, a council and an assembly, and the rule of law. The inscription, in fact, deals with a legal question: the city's claim to inherit from a man who dies without heirs. This city is not a new foundation but rather an old agglomeration existing from well into the 2nd millennium, that transformed itself into a *polis*. The names of some of the city magistrates are indigenous; the name of the royal overlord is Iranian. It was the natives who had turned themselves into Greeks.[1] Perhaps this transformation occurred during the regin of Ariarathes V Phihellene, who had studied in Athens with Attalus III and who celebrated Greek games in Cappadocia with athletes and Dionysiac artists invited from Athens. He may have refounded both Mazaca, which Strabo (XII. 2.9) says had a constitution designed by Charondas, and Tyana, naming them both Eusebeia.

In a sanctuary high in the Anti-Taurus mountains at Nimrud Dagh,

[1] Robert, *Noms indigènes* I, 457–523.

Antiochus I, king of fertile Commagene (about 69–34 B.C.) spoke of combining the Persian, Macedonian gods, and the local gods, and the Persian and Greek and local traditions.[1] At the same time he called himself friendly to the Romans; instead of alternating between the Greek and the Iranian world, he tried to treat them as if they could be translated into each other. In this sanctuary, built to hold his "blessed" body after it had sent forth his god-favoured spirit into the surrounding skies of Ahuramazda, Antiochus displayed his paternal Iranian ancestors descended from the Achaemenians and his maternal ancestors who came down from Alexander. By his piety and devotion he sought to turn his inherited kingdom into the abode of all the gods and he worshipped their statues in the time-honoured fashion of the Greeks and the Persians, as well as with the sacrifices and festivals which were the custom of all men from time immemorial. He spoke in Greek, but he and his ancestors wore Iranian dress, and he specified that the priests of his sanctuary should dress in the Persian fashion. He worshipped Ahuramazda but called him also Zeus and Mithra, whom he identified with Apollo, the ancestral god of the Seleucids. Under the shadow of Rome (Vespasian was to turn Commagene into a Roman province in 72 A.D.), Antiochus sought to create a sanctuary of the gods of the Persians in the manner of the Achaemenians three hundred years earlier, and at the same time to acknowledge the gods of the Greeks and the Hellenistic kings. In short, he meant to be all things to all men – and all gods. And it was more than anybody could do. It is his lack of sense of proportion that is most striking – and most revealing, especially when it most looks like boldness: "Antiochus was in the grip of a vision whose devastating power and unity can be sensed in everything he touched. Sculpture, architecture, the use of natural features, the ordering of the cult speak with the same voice as the inscriptions, of a man possessed by the dissonant tongues of Persia and Greece, and dedicated to the service of five outlandish demons – Zeus–Oromasdes, Apollo–Mithra–Helios–Hermes, Artagnes–Heracles–Ares, his beloved Commagene, and himself."[2]

[1] Jalabert and Mouterde, *Inscriptions . . . de Syrie* I, number 1; H. Dörrie, *Der Königskult des Antiochos von Kommagene im Lichte neuer Inschriften-Funde* (*AAWG* 3rd series, LX, 1964); F. K. Dörner and T. Goell, *Arsameia am Nymphaios* (Berlin, 1963); T. Goell, "The Excavation of the 'Hierothesion' of Antiochus I of Commagene on Nemrud Dagh (1953–1956)", *BASOR* CXLVII (1947), 4–22.

[2] Oswyn Murray, "Ozymandias, King of Kings", *The Classical Review* LXXX (Oxford, 1966), 108.

The decisive event in the history of eastern Asia Minor is Pompey's defeat in 62 B.C. of Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus, and his allies, which included the kings of Cappadocia and Commagene. For forty years Mithridates had carried on much more than a local war. He had co-ordinated his fighting with various crises in Italy and the rest of the Roman world. Because he understood his struggle in world-wide terms (that is, in terms of the Mediterranean), Mithridates foresaw his defeat would mean the spread of Roman power from the Ocean to Pontus. But this did not occur immediately after 62 B.C.: it took something like a century for the effects of the Roman victory in 62 B.C. to show themselves to be irreversible.

After the defeat of Mithridates no king held sway over the lands and peoples which Mithridates had led. Rome annexed part of Pontus; in other parts it recognized the rule of dynasts and independent cities. Some years after Pompey's settlement a monarchy arose in eastern Pontus which survived until A.D. 64. In contrast to Pontus the kings in Cappadocia and Commagene survived; after 62 B.C. as clients but not satellites of Rome they depended to some extent on Rome's endorsement.

On suspicion or pretext – the reasons are not entirely clear – that the king of Cappadocia was conspiring with the king of Parthia, Tiberius annexed Cappadocia in A.D. 14. In A.D. 64 Rome annexed eastern Pontus. For the first time she ruled the whole southern shore of the Black Sea up to the Caucasus. Intent on asserting his own authority and the authority of Rome both at home and abroad after the victory in the civil war which had made him emperor, Vespasian allowed his commander in Syria to attack and annex Commagene and Armenia Minor in A.D. 72. His intent appears to have been to fix the Roman frontier on the Euphrates. The dynasties which claimed descent from the Achaemenians were no more.

Rome's direct assertion of her rule over eastern Asia Minor brought the West closer to these lands. Impressed by the difficulty of supplying troops during the Armenian War of 58–64, Vespasian and his successors had roads built in Pontus and Cappadocia so that the troops on the Euphrates could be easily supplied. Without rulers claiming descent from the Achaemenians Cappadocia, Pontus and Commagene still experienced something like cultural unity with deeply Iranized Armenia and with Parthia. But without political expression this culture probably grew to misunderstand itself.[1]

[1] F. Cumont, "The Frontier Provinces of the East", *CAH* XI, pp. 606–13.

KINGS OF PONTUS

Mithridates dynast of Cius	337/6–302/1 B.C.
Mithridates I	302/1–266/5
Ariobarzanes	266/5–c.255
Mithridates II	c. 225–c. 220
Mithridates III	c. 220–c. 185
Pharnaces I	c. 185–c. 170
Mithridates IV Philopator Philadelphus	c. 170–c. 150
Mithridates V Euergetes	c. 150–121/0
Mithridates VI Eupator	c. 121/0–63
Pharnaces II (ruler of the Cimmerian Bosporus)	63–47
Darius	39–37?

KINGS OF CAPPADOCIA

Ariarathes III (first ruler to assert independence)	255/1–220
Ariathes IV Eusebes	220–c. 162
Ariathes V Eusebes Philopator	c. 163–c. 130
Ariarathes VI Epiphanes Philopator	c. 120–c. 111
Ariarathes VII Philometor	c. 111–c. 100
Ariarathes Eusebes Philopator (son of Mithridates VI of Pontus)	c. 100–c. 88
Ariarathes VIII	c. 96
End of dynasty. Cappadocians elect a noble, Ariobarzanes, king	
Ariobarzanes I Philoromaios	c. 95–c. 62
Ariobarzanes II Philopator	62–c. 54
Ariobarzanes III Eusebes Philoromaios	c. 54–42
Ariarathes IX	42–36
Archelaus	36–A.D. 17

KINGS OF COMMAGENE

Ptolemaeus (asserts independence of Syria in about 163/2 B.C.)	c. 163/2–c. 130
Samus II Theosebes Dikaios	c. 130–c. 100
Mithridates I Callinicus	c. 100–c. 70
Antiochos I Theos Dikaios Epiphanes Philoromaios Philhellen	c. 70–c. 35
Mithridates II	c. 31
Antiochus II (did not reign)	died 29
Mithridates III	c. 20
Antiochus III	died A.D. 17
(With his death Commagene annexed by Rome)	
Antiochus IV	A.D. 38–72

The above lists are compiled from E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (London, 1968), 164–5; see also G. Perl, "Zur Chronologie der Königreiche Bithynia, Pontos und Bosporos," in *Studien zur Geschichte und Philosophie des Altertums*, ed. J. Harmatta (Amsterdam, 1968), 299–330.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF IRAN UNDER THE SASANIANS

THE RISE OF THE SASANIANS

The rise of the Sasanian dynasty can be understood as the successful struggle of a minor ruler of Persis (today Fārs province) not only against his Parthian overlord, but also against a multitude of neighbouring rulers. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the pre-Sasanian history of Persis is almost a total blank save for what is known from coins struck by local dynasts. At least one local kingdom had existed in the heart of Persis since the breakup of Seleucid power in Iran, if not earlier, from shortly after the death of Alexander the Great.[1] The ruins of Persepolis and Pasargadae alone would have been a standing reminder of the past glory of the area, even if knowledge of a great empire for the most part had been forgotten.[2] The names (such as Darius and Artaxerxes) on the coins of the local rulers who held sway here before the rise of the Sasanians testify to a certain continuity of Achaemenian traditions, if not to an actual descent in a side line from the royal Achaemenian family itself. The history of the immediate predecessors of Ardashīr is thus virtually unknown and the few items of information about them are conflicting.

Most scholars have assumed, following the Arabic history by Ṭabarī, that Sāsān was the grandfather and Pāpak the father of Ardashīr, founder of the Sasanian dynasty. The trilingual inscription (Greek, Parthian and Middle Persian) of Shāpūr I, on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam, however, does not say that Sāsān was the father of Pāpak.[3] In an ascending order of importance, Sāsān is merely designated as a lord, while Pāpak is a king. Ardashīr, his son, is called

[1] See pp. 299ff.

[2] E. Yarshater argues for the total loss of the memory of the Achaemenians as such in the course of the Parthian period; see "Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?" in *La Persia nel Medioevo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1971), pp. 517–31.

[3] There is still no complete and adequate edition and translation of the three texts (the Middle Persian original, and the Parthian and Greek versions). A. Maricq, "Res gestae divi Saporis", *Syria*, xxxv (1958), 295–360, edited and translated the Greek text with excellent notes on the other versions and on the inscription as a whole.

king of kings of Iran, while Shāpūr, son of Ardashīr, is called king of kings of Iran and non-Iran. There is another version of the lineage of Ardashīr found in a story in the Middle Persian book, the *Kār-nāmag* or "Book of Deeds of Ardashīr son of Pāpak". The same version is also given by Firdausī in his epic the *Shāh-nāma* and appears to be the basis of a scurrilous Greek adaptation of the tale recorded by Agathias, a sixth-century Byzantine author. This story tells how Sāsān was married to the daughter of a local prince Pāpak after the latter learned that Sāsān had royal Achaemenian blood in him. From this union Ardashīr was born. Then Sāsān vanishes from the story and Pāpak is considered the father of Ardashīr. This corresponds to the inscription and other later Arabic and New Persian sources. The problem is, who was Sāsān?

One should note that Shāpūr's inscription does not give us the answer and for lack of another course, one may choose between the version of the epic, and the statement of Ṭabarī that Sāsān was the father of Pāpak. Ṭabarī's account, however, is suspect, since he reports a lengthy genealogy of Ardashīr tracing it back to mythical, heroic kings of ancient Iran. It is more likely that Sāsān was a remote ancestor of Ardashīr whose name was given to the dynasty as Achaemenes was for the Achaemenids. Most plausible, however, is the epic version which may have the following interpretation: Sāsān was the natural father of Ardashīr, but he died shortly after the birth of his son whereupon, according to current Zoroastrian practice, Pāpak adopted Ardashīr as his own son; or the adoption may have occurred after a certain Shāpūr, Pāpak's son, was killed.

In any case, King Pāpak probably united much of Fārs under his sway during the hectic time of the Parthian sovereign Vologeses IV[1] (192–207) when Septimius Severus invaded Mesopotamia and wrought havoc there. About the year 205 (or possibly 208 according to another reckoning), if we may accept this date from an inscription of Shāpūr on a pillar from his capital at Bīshāpūr, which gives the date 58 with no indication of any era, something happened which started a Sasanian chronology.[2] Because we have no sources, one can only guess at the event in Fārs which led to this dating. Perhaps Pāpak overthrew a ruler of Stakhr at that time, or he may have decided to proclaim his

[1] Vologeses V according to a different way of reckoning; see pp. 94, 297.

[2] See R. Ghirshman, "Inscription du monument de Chapour 1er à Châpour", *RAA* x (1936), 123–9.

independence of the Parthians at that date. Since the same inscription also mentions two other ways of dating, the fortieth year of the fire of Ardashīr and the twenty-fourth year of the fire of Shāpūr, the conjecture that the year 58 had something to do with Pāpak, rather than with Ardashīr's rise to the governorship of a city, or the like, is eminently plausible.[1] This political interpretation is also more likely than any other, such as a religious act connected with the shrine dedicated to Anahita at Stakhr, with which the early Sasanians seem to have been closely connected.[2] The custom of establishing a fire temple, at least kindling a new fire at the accession of a new ruler, may have existed in Parthian times. The fire of the Sasanian monarch was extinguished at the end of his reign, a symbolic as well as religious act. In any event, a Sasanian system of dating from the year of Pāpak did not spread; rather the old method of dating by the regnal years of a king, or the Seleucid calendar, beginning with the year 312 B.C., became usual.

The events preceding Ardashīr's victory over Ardavān, the last of the Parthians, in *c.* 224, may be reconstructed from brief notices in later Islamic sources. There is a possibility that the Parthian king Vologeses IV defeated Pāpak, after the latter's revolt, and forced him to return to Parthian allegiance, at least for a time.[3] It is unlikely that Pāpak extended his rule much beyond central Fārs, and most conquests even there may have been the work of Ardashīr. The date of Pāpak's death is unknown, but before that he was succeeded by his eldest son Shāpūr, who probably was killed accidentally after a very short rule. Ardashīr, whose relationship to Pāpak we have already mentioned, became king, probably about 216, and began to expand his realm into Kirmān in the east and Elymais to the west.

The overthrow of the Parthians seems to have been the result of a coalition headed by Ardashīr, since the Syriac *Chronicle of Arbela* says that the rulers of Adiabene and Kirkuk joined Ardashīr in a crusade against the Parthians which was successful.[4] The date of the battle of Hormizdagān, in which Ardavān was killed, cannot be determined satisfactorily because of the uncertainty of the entire chronology of the early Sasanians.

There are now at least two schemes of chronology for the early

1 See p. 783 for further detail.

2 See Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (London, 1962), p. 206, for references.

3 E. Sachau, "Die Chronik von Arbela", *APAW*, 1915, p. 56. [On the *Chronicle of Arbela* cf. pp. 92 and 925–6, 1276 in this vol.]

4 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Sasanians, both of which are plausible. It is impossible to discuss here the vast literature relating to such questions as the difference between accession to the throne and coronation, the Babylonian practice of counting the accession year from new year's day, the death of Mānī, and the like. Fortunately, the two positions have been well summarized by their two major proponents, S. H. Taqizadeh and W. B. Henning.[1] In short, they are the following.

Event	Taqizadeh	Henning
Ardashīr's first regnal year began	26 Sept. 226	27 Sept. 223
Accession to the throne	6 April 227	28 April 224
Shāpūr's first year began	22 Sept. 241	23 Sept. 239
Shāpūr's crowning	9 April 243	12 April 240
His death	April 273	May 270
Death of Mānī	26 Feb. 277	2 March 274
Death of Bahrām I	July 277	Sept. 274

A difference of three years exists throughout. The discovery of a Greek codex on the life of Mānī seems to resolve this discrepancy, but problems still remain. The relevant passage in the codex reads as follows:

When I became twenty-four years old, in the year in which the Persian king Dari-Ardashir conquered the city of Hatra, and in which King Shapur, his son, put on the greatest diadem [was crowned] in the month of Pharmuthi, on the day of the moon, my most blessed Lord took compassion on me, summoned me to his grace [etc.][2]

The Egyptian month and year can be calculated to show that the crowning of Shāpūr as co-ruler with his father must have taken place on 12 April 240 (first of the Babylonian month Nisan 551). The co-regency of Shāpūr and Ardashīr seems to have lasted until early in 242. Thus we have a problem that Shāpūr may have had two "crownings", one as co-regent in 240 and another as sole ruler in 243, although it is more likely that there was only one crowning in 240.

After Ardashīr overthrew Ardavān, his task of conquest was not ended. The great Parthian feudal families, if one may use the word "feudal" in its widest connotation, either submitted to Ardashīr

[1] W. B. Henning and S. H. Taqizadeh, "The dates of Mani's life", *Asia Major* VI (1957), 106–21.

[2] Cf. A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* v (Bonn, 1970), p. 120.

willingly or unwillingly, or they were in turn defeated. The family of the Karen, with their centre probably at Nihāvand, is said to have been almost exterminated save one member who fled to Armenia and founded the Kamsarakan noble family, according to an Armenian source.[1] Khosrov, the Arsacid king of Armenia, certainly led an opposition to Ardashīr, and Armenian tradition has it that his relative the Kushān king Vehsadjan (Vasudeva?) supported him, whereas the Suren and other noble Iranian families submitted to Ardashīr. Members of the Karen family, however, appear high on the list of notables at the court of Ardashīr, as recorded in the great inscription of Shāpūr I,[2] which contradicts the notice in the Armenian source above. Therefore, we may assume that gradually most of the great lords, including the Karen, joined Ardashīr.

In some areas, Ardashīr installed sub-kings from his own family as rulers. Thus one son, also called Ardashīr, was made king of Kirmān.[3] Other sons were probably installed elsewhere, and Persian governors or other officials were sent to the principalities which had submitted. Governors and kings, who were members of the Sasanian family, were shifted from one area to another according to policy or need. Although there is no evidence that Ardashīr had any detailed and clear knowledge of the Achaemenians, the fact that he and his son Shāpūr carved rock-reliefs near their Achaemenian counterparts at Naqsh-i Rustam indicates a policy of cultural as well as political aggrandizement in imitation of the past. Several Roman historians assert that Ardashīr consciously planned to re-establish the Achaemenian empire, and there is no reason to doubt the intention of the founder of the dynasty to create a vast empire.[4]

Ctesiphon, on the plains of Mesopotamia, was the main, administrative capital of the Sasanian empire, while in the summer the court moved to the cooler highlands of the Iranian plateau. Ctesiphon was in reality a group of towns, and they were called collectively Māhōzē in Syriac or al-Madā'in in Arabic, both meaning "the cities". One of the towns was called Veh Ardashīr, probably built by the first Sasanian ruler. Another was called Veh Antiok Khusrau (or Rūmagān), built by Khusrau I and settled with war prisoners from Antioch, just as

[1] Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, tr. R. W. Thomson (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), II. 73, p. 219.

[2] Sprengling, *Third Century Iran*, 9, 11, 76 (Shahpuhr KZ, Parthian lines 23–4, MP line 29, Greek line 57).

[3] *Ibid.* and Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 10.

[4] Dio Cassius 80. 3, Herodian 6. 2, 1–2, and foll.

Shāpūr I had built Gundēshāpūr (see below). The district in which Ctesiphon was located was called Khusraụ Shād Kavād, at least during part of the sixth century. Khusrau II held court much of the time at Dastagird to the east of Ctesiphon. The region of Ctesiphon was a natural site for a capital since the Tigris and Euphrates approached each other there, and canals connected the two. Trade routes from the four points of the compass converged here and wealth from trade accumulated in the area of ancient Babylon and modern Baghdad. Furthermore, much of the agricultural wealth of the Sasanian empire was concentrated in Mesopotamia.

Ctesiphon was exposed to attack and conquest by enemies coming down the rivers from the north-west, so from time to time certain Sasanian kings sought to establish their courts at cities more removed from danger of capture. Shāpūr I built Bīshāpūr in Fārs province and probably died there. Gundēshāpūr or Susa may have seen the court established in them for a time, but neither city could compete with Ctesiphon for economic as well as strategic reasons. Likewise Hamadān, an ancient city, was probably the summer capital sometimes, and Stakhr at others. Again both cities were too cold in winter to serve as capitals, as were most towns on the plateau.

Most of the Sasanian kings were crowned in Ctesiphon, although other ceremonies also may have occurred in Stakhr, the home town of the dynasty in Fārs province, or in Shīz, the site of the fire temple of Ādhur Gushnasp in western Jibāl. In Stakhr the site as well as the rôle in history of the temple of Anahita, called the fire of Anahit-Ardashīr and Anahit the Lady (*'n'ḥyt 'rtḥštr W 'nḥyt ZY MLKT'*) in the MP inscription of Kartīr at KZ, Naqsh-i Rustam (line 8), is uncertain. Perhaps it was a royal shrine of the Sasanians, which played no important rôle in history after the formation of the empire.

The extent of Ardashīr's conquests cannot be determined with precision. Most of the Parthian domains, including vassal states, as we have noted, submitted to the Sasanians. According to Ṭabarī, in the east the kings of the Kushāns and of Tūrān submitted to Ardashīr, while in the west the island and opposite coast of Baḥrain were conquered.[1] It is unlikely that Gīlān and the Caspian Sea coast submitted to Ardashīr since the name "Gīlān King" appears first in the reign of Shāpūr, who installed his son, the later king of kings Bahrām I, as

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, pp. 17–18. Tūrān has been identified with the Qusdār of Islamic sources, south of present Kalāt in Pakistan Baluchistan.



Map 3. The western regions of the Sasanian empire (for other locations see Map 14, p. 748).

ruler there. The Marv oasis was sufficiently important for Ardashīr to install a king with his own name. It is unknown whether the latter was a son or brother of the king of kings, but he should have been a member of the royal family.[1] We can only speculate that Marv was the outpost of the empire in the north-east since neither Sogdiana nor Khwārazm are mentioned in any source as ruled by Ardashīr.

THE EARLY RULERS: THE CONFLICT WITH ROME

The main adversary of the Persians, however, was the Roman empire, and the ambitions of the first Sasanian ruler were soon countered by Rome. Ardashīr besieged Nisibis (at present Nusaybin in Turkey on the Iraq frontier) in 230, and his forces raided Syria and elsewhere in the Roman east. The Romans tried to make peace with the Sasanian ruler but failed. Alexander Severus, after more fruitless negotiations with Ardashīr, set out against him in 232. One column of his army marched into Armenia to aid the Armenians, while two other columns operated to the south. We do not know the course of events, but the northern column seems to have been successful, whereas the others failed, mostly on account of physical hardships. In any case, Ardashīr was repulsed and Alexander Severus celebrated a triumph in Rome.[2]

The murder of Alexander Severus in 235 and the subsequent troubles in the Roman empire may have induced Ardashīr to attack again. The dates are uncertain, but towards the end of his reign, probably in 238, he took both Carrhae and Nisibis. We may surmise that not long thereafter Ardashīr allowed his son Shāpūr to rule jointly with him, as coins with busts of both men suggest. Since the dates of the end of Ardashīr's reign and the accession and coronation of Shāpūr are disputed, we have almost five years in which certain events may be placed. One of the most important was the capture of Hatra, the trading and caravan city in the desert between the Tigris and Euphrates. Hatra had withstood sieges of Trajan, Septimius Severus and Ardashīr. The attack of the last had changed the animosity of Hatra against the Romans into an alliance. Hatra may have been integrated into a defence system of Roman *limes* initiated in northern Mesopotamia by Caracalla and continued by Alexander Severus.[3] At all events, Ardashīr cap-

[1] Shapur KZ, MP line 55.
[2] *Scriptores Historial Augustae*, 55–6.
[3] Cf. A. Maricq, "Les dernières années de Hatra", *Syria* xxxiv (1957), 291.

tured the city, and this may have been one event which provoked a Roman counter-thrust.

Because of internal difficulties including the rapid change of emperors, the Romans could not move against the Persians for several years, and it was not until 243 that Gordian advanced against Shāpūr. In the meantime, Shāpūr had been busy, according to the *Chronicle of Arbela*, in subduing the Khwārazmians and the people of Gīlān on the Caspian Sea coast.[1] Whatever the chronology of events in the first years of Shāpūr, in his first clash with Rome the Persians were on the defensive. Carrhae and Nisibis were retaken by the Romans and the Persians were defeated at a battle near Resaina. Some time after the battle the praetorian prefect Timesitheus, who was the power behind the young emperor Gordian, died, presumably of illness, and was replaced by Philip, who was an Arab. In 244 the two armies met in battle at Massice, or Anbār, not far from Ctesiphon, and Shāpūr won. After the battle, he gave a new name to the town, Pērōz-Shāpūr or "victorious is Shāpūr". The emperor Gordian either died in the battle or was murdered by his own men, and Philip became emperor.

Philip paid a ransom of 500,000 gold *dinars* to Shāpūr, according to Shāpūr's great inscription. He also probably agreed not to aid the Armenians against Shāpūr, for the Arsacid king of Armenia was still a bitter enemy of the Sasanians. Unfortunately, information about events in Armenia is lacking and we must rely on probable inferences. The Arsacid king of Armenia, according to the Armenian sources of Agathangelos and Moses of Khorene, was called Khosrov and he was assassinated at the instigation of the Sasanian king. No dates are given, but it probably happened under Shāpūr rather than Ardashīr, presumably about A.D. 252. The son of the Armenian king Tiridates fled to Roman territory and this is probably the reason for Shāpūr's decision to reopen hostilities against Rome.

In his inscription Shāpūr says (Parthian line 4, Greek line 10), "Caesar again lied and did wrong to Armenia, and we attacked the Roman empire". The date of this campaign is disputed, for both 253 and 256 have partisans. A solution to the problem may be that two campaigns have been combined into one, a preliminary raiding in 253 and a more successful expedition in 256. In the latter year a Roman army of sixty thousand was destroyed at Barbalissus and Syria was laid waste. Dura Europus and the city of Antioch were among the many

[1] Sachau, "Die Chronik", p. 64.

towns captured and the Christian bishop of Antioch, Demetrianus, was one of the captives settled at a new town in Khūzistān called Veh Antiok Shāpūr ("Better than Antioch [has] Shāpūr [built this]"), which became corrupted later into Gundēshāpūr.

It seems that Shāpūr was besieging Carrhae and Edessa when the new emperor Valerian marched against him. The date of the battle near Edessa, when Valerian was captured by Shāpūr, is also disputed – either the end of 258, or 259, or some even suggest 260. The triumph of Shāpūr was commemorated by rock-carvings showing him on horse-back and his Roman opponent kneeling before him at Naqsh-i Rustam and at Bīshāpūr. Shāpūr's forces again ravaged Syria and also invaded Cappadocia. In the great inscription of Shāpūr I the various cities taken are listed, but they were not held for more than a short period. It was less the Romans and more Odenath, the ruler of Palmyra, who attacked detachments of the Persians causing them to retreat to their homeland. The history of the next few years is clouded, for the extent of Palmyrene successes against Shāpūr is unknown. We may assume that Shāpūr was content to rest on his laurels and to supervise the building of dams in Khūzistān and the embellishment of his capital of Bishāpūr by his prisoners from the Roman empire.

Probably a short time after the victory over Valerian, Shāpūr made some changes in his empire. In Armenia after the murder of King Khosrov and the flight of Tiridates, a certain Artavazd seems to have ruled until about 262 when Shāpūr appointed his own son Hormizd-Ardashīr as great king of Armenia. Another son, also called Shāpūr, was king of Mesene, and he had probably succeeded his uncle Mihrshāh, lord of Mesene, known from Manichaean texts.[1] A third son Varahrān, or later Bahrām, was king in Gīlān, and a fourth son Narseh was the king of the Sakas, ruling over large territories in eastern Iran, including Sind. Several brothers of Shāpūr seem to have continued in the posts assigned to them by Ardashīr; one Ardashīr was king of Adiabene, and another, with the same name, was king of Kirmān. Amazasp, king of Georgia, was an Iranian, possibly related to the Sasanian family. Many other princes and lords appear in the *notitia dignitatum*, at the end of the great inscription of Shāpūr I. If we examine the extent of the empire as vaunted by Shāpūr in his inscription, it becomes clear that much of Transcaucasia was ruled by local kings subject to him, for only in

[1] Middle Persian fragment from Turfan, M 475; cf. F. W. K. Müller, "Handschriften in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan", *APAW* 1904, p. 83.

Georgia and Armenia are names of Iranians given. In the east the empire extended over the "land of the Kushāns up to Pashkibur (Peshawar?), and to Kāshghar, Sogdiana and Tashkent" (Parthian line 2, Greek line 4). In other words, the empire included the domain of the Kushāns, at least as far as the lowlands of the north-west frontier of Pakistan. It also extended to Sogdiana and Central Asia, but did not include them. For it is likely that what Shāpūr meant in his inscription was that the Kushān kingdom had submitted to him, and the boundaries of that kingdom extended to Peshawar, Sogdiana, Kāshghar (or possibly Kish) and Tashkent. No Sasanian prince is designated as Kushānshāh by Shāpūr, so we may infer that the ruler who had submitted retained his title, but under Sasanian suzerainty.

At the time of the capture of Valerian, Shāpūr must have been advanced in age, which may explain his apparent lack of reaction to the expansion of Palmyra. The king of kings must have been busy with internal matters, for we know he took an interest in Mānī and in matters of culture and thought. He built a new city in Fārs province, Bīshāpūr, where presumably artisans from the Roman empire worked, as evidenced by mosaics found there. The religious developments during Shāpūr's reign are discussed elsewhere.[1]

The date of the death of Shāpūr and the accession of his son Hormizd I is subject to the same controversy as the dates of accession of Ardashīr and Shāpūr. Whether the date is 270 or 273, Hormizd, or Hormizd-Ardashīr as he is known from inscriptions, ruled only a little more than a year before he died. Nothing is known of his short reign except a notice in the Arabic history of al-Tha'ālibī that he waged war against the Sogdians, not improbable in view of his reputation for valour in war.[2]

With the accession of Varahrān I, or, to use the later form of the name, Bahrām, we may sense a change in the dynasty. Bahrām was not the son of Hormizd, as some later Arabic and Persian writers supposed; rather he was another son of Shāpūr, and he was called the king of Gīlān, in the great inscription of Shāpūr I. In this inscription, Bahrām was not honoured by a fire in his name, as were both Hormizd and Narseh. This may indicate that Bahrām's mother was a lesser queen or possibly even a concubine. Narseh, king of the Sakas and of the east, most probably objected to the accession of Bahrām II, son of Bahrām I,

[1] See chapters 22, 23, 27. Ed.

[2] *Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. and trans. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), p. 499.

but he certainly blamed the father, since in one instance he substituted his own name for that of Bahrām I on a rock-inscription of Bīshāpūr.[1] We may believe that the problem of succession to the throne had not been settled in a manner agreeable to all princes, and Narseh may have thought he should have succeeded his brothers, but we have no evidence that he revolted. When Bahrām I arranged for his son Bahrām II to succeed him, Narseh was surely unhappy but bided his time. Bahrām I ruled only three years and during his reign, Aurelian brought an end to Palmyra and re-established Roman rule in the east. Under Bahrām I the priest Kartīr, or Kerdir, continued his career of consolidating the state church, and incidentally of self-aggrandizement. He was probably the main influence in the imprisonment and death of Mānī which took place under Bahrām I.

The religious history of the reigns of Hormizd and the two Bahrāms is dominated by the figure of Kartīr, who may have been the real power behind the throne of Bahrām II. One might speculate that the priest used his influence in securing the succession to the throne for Bahrām II, rather than for Narseh. The latter seems to have followed a liberal policy towards religious minorities in the empire, much like his father, Shāpūr, whereas the Bahrāms were more amenable to the wishes of the conservative Zoroastrian priesthood. Apart from his religious impact, Kartīr's influence on political affairs should not be underestimated.

Bahrām II at the outset of his reign had to face a Roman invasion under the emperor Carus in 283. The Romans captured Ctesiphon and would have extended their conquests if the emperor had not died in December of the same year. Peace was made, and this permitted the Romans to regain the province of Mesopotamia, which seems to have been under Persian domination since Shāpūr's conquests. The reason for the acceptance by Bahrām II of such onerous terms was possibly a revolt of Hormizd, brother of Bahrām, in the eastern provinces.[2] The rebel was reportedly supported by the Sakas, Kushāns, and people of Gīlān. We do not know what position Hormizd held; perhaps he was a king in Khurāsān, or even in Sakastān, and he may have proclaimed himself great king of the Kushāns. Bahrām was able to put down the revolt, and we might surmise that he installed his son, also

[1] E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli* I (Berlin, 1924), p. 173. In January 1975 the rock-carving of a male figure was found under the horse of the king. It probably represents Bahrām III whom Narseh conquered, and it was added to the relief after the victory of Narseh.

[2] Zonaras XII. 30, and *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Carus. 8.

called Bahrām, as the king of the Sakas in place of the rebel. Bahrām II had several rock-reliefs cut at Bīshāpūr and at Naqsh-i Rustam, possibly in honour of his victory over his rebel brother, or other conquests. He also had reliefs carved at Gūyum and Barm-i Dilak, north and south of present Shīrāz.

About 288 the new Roman emperor Diocletian placed Tiridates, an Arsacid prince who had fled to Roman domains, on the throne of at least part of Armenia, and Bahrām by his inaction acquiesced. Probably Sasanian control had become weakened over some sections of Armenia, though Narseh, son of Shāpūr I may have been appointed by Bahrām to rule over the country. When Bahrām II died in 293, his son Bahrām III ruled for only a few months until he was deposed by his uncle Narseh.[1] We have a bilingual inscription, or probably two bilingual inscriptions, of Narseh at Paikuli in modern Iraq near the Persian frontier. Unfortunately, many of the stones of the monument are missing, but some sense may be made of what remains in spite of great lacunae.

Narseh was in Armenia at the time of the death of Bahrām II, either as its king, or possibly as head of a Sasanian army intent on defeating and deposing a competitor, Tiridates. In his inscription, however, Narseh calls himself "king of kings". Although the title in the inscription – "king of the Armenians" – may refer to Narseh before he took the throne, it more plausibly should refer to Tiridates afterwards in the inscription. In any case, according to the inscription, a noble called Vahunam took the diadem and either for a time usurped the throne or more likely prepared the way for Bahrām III, the king of the Sakas. Some of the nobility were killed and others objected to the high-handed policies of the new régime. Many nobles joined in a conspiracy to overthrow Bahrām and sought the candidacy to the throne of Narseh. He came from Armenia, probably having made peace with, and possibly even with the support of, Tiridates. Narseh was counselled by his new supporters to come to the border of Babylonia (Asūristān), where the site of Paikuli was located. A caravan of notables came to him to pledge allegiance. Kartīr the famous mobad, having seen the writing on the wall, may have been among the number who came. The fate of Vahunam and Bahram III is not known, for

[1] Coins of Bahrām II, but with the legend "Hormizd King of Kings", may reflect the independence of Hormizd, brother of Bahrām II, in the east, or less likely they may date from the very end of Bahrām II's rule, indicating a short reign of Hormizd after the death of Bahrām II.

the first or upper inscription of Paikuli has too many lacunae at the end to reconstruct it, and they vanish from history.

The second or lower inscription at Paikuli is mainly a list of rulers and lords who supported Narseh or were subject to the Sasanian monarch after his accession. Among them we find the king of the Kushāns; the king of the Khwārazmians is also mentioned, indicating Sasanian suzerainty in that part of Central Asia. A certain 'Amr, king of the Lakhmids (Parthian *lḥmyšn*), and another 'Amr, king of the Apgarids (Parthian *'pgrn'n*), testify to the submission of Arab tribes to Sasanian overlordship. The latter name is enigmatic, for the last king of Edessa, or Osroene, supposedly died in Rome. Are we to suppose a continuation of a tribe called the Apgarids, somehow related to the kings of Edessa, which lay within the borders of the Roman empire? Are we to interpret the list of rulers as those who supported Narseh or those who came or sent representatives to the coronation of Narseh, rather than direct tributaries of the Sasanian state? Other potentates in the list include the king of Paradene and the king of Makrān, both in present Balūchistān.

When we analyse this list we are struck by the multitude of lords and kings mostly from the borders of the Sasanian state. First, not one of the rulers can be identified as a Sasanian prince; second, none of the important areas such as Kirmān, Marv, Gīlān or Meshan, where kings once ruled, according to the great inscription of Shāpūr I, is mentioned; and third, none of the great feudal families, such as the Karen or Suren, is noted. We may tentatively conclude that Narseh was supported by a host of minor rulers, while his opponent Bahrām III held the allegiance of the central part of the empire. We may further suspect a consequent weakening of the position of the great nobility after the accession of Narseh. Unfortunately, our sources are silent about internal affairs during the reign of Narseh, and all is conjecture.

Narseh, once on the throne, determined to regain territory lost to the Romans by Bahrām II, which mainly meant Armenia and Mesopotamia. Again events in Armenia remain unclear, but Tiridates was driven from his throne by Narseh in 296. About the beginning of 297 a Roman army under Galerius, the Caesar of Diocletian in the latter's reform of the Roman empire, was defeated and Narseh recovered Mesopotamia. In the following year, however, Narseh lost his harem in a rout of the Sasanian army by the same Galerius in Armenia. Diocletian made peace at the request of Narseh whereby the Romans not only regained

suzerainty over northern Mesopotamia and Armenia but obtained additional land joined to their domains in this area. Furthermore, trade between the two empires was to be channelled through Nisibis as the sole place of exchange, at the request of the Romans. After this defeat the Persians and the Romans remained at peace for forty years.

As mentioned, internal affairs during the reigns of Narseh and his son Hormizd II are unknown, but from brief notices we may infer a change from the time of the Bahrāms. The religious policy of persecution of the Manichaeans, for one thing, changed to toleration under Narseh.[1] This change may have been induced by Narseh's desire to secure the support of Manichaeans in the Roman empire, for in 297 in Alexandria Diocletian issued an edict against the propaganda of the Manichaeans. We do not know about other religious minorities, but since there are no indications of Christian martyrdoms or anti-Jewish acts from this period, we may assume that the policy of toleration which held sway under Shāpūr I was resumed under Narseh. Towards the end of Narseh's reign the king of Armenia was converted to Christianity, which changed the destiny of that country, soon to become a religious ally of the Roman empire after Constantine was himself converted in 312. That Narseh was not such an ardent supporter of orthodox Zoroastrianism is indicated by a notice in al-Tha'ālibī that he did not visit the fire temples.[2] Other information about the reign of Narseh is lacking.

Hormizd II ruled for seven years (302–9), a hard and strong man who none the less was just and well liked according to various Arabic sources. Otherwise nothing is known of his reign. A short excursus on the urban and agricultural policy of the early Sasanian rulers may help to elucidate internal affairs. The town-building activities of the early Sasanians are well known. An ancient practice of moving populations from one part of the empire to another was followed by Shāpūr I when he settled Roman prisoners in the new towns of Gundēshāpūr and Bīshāpūr. Other new foundations or at least renamings of older settlements are amply attested. Less well known, but more significant, is the enormous expansion of cultivated land in Khūzistān, the Diyālā river basin and elsewhere.[3] The area of cultivated land apparently was

[1] Cf. C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky, "Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten", *SPAW* 1933, p. 28.

[2] *Histoire des rois des Perses*, p. 510.

[3] Cf. R. Adams, "Agriculture and urban life in early southwestern Iran", *Science* CXXXVI (1962), 109–22, and his *Land behind Baghdad* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 69–83.

larger in Sasanian times than at any period before or since. Archaeological evidence would indicate an enormous effort on the part of the Sasanian government to extend and maintain a costly irrigation system, in many areas of the empire. This extension of agriculture is more impressive than the founding of cities, for the latter were usually small, though with strong surrounding walls, to judge from the few archaeological surveys which have been made. With the increase of agricultural land, a meritorious act in the Zoroastrian religion, the Sasanian kings also laid the basis for an increase in population. The increase of population over the earlier periods is difficult to assess but the archaeological evidence for expansion is a good indication. The new Sasanian towns were laid out in a regular order, and most Sasanian settlements over both earlier and later areas of cultivated land were centres of larger agricultural districts. The pattern of towns in the later eastern Islamic caliphate took its form in the Sasanian period.

THE REIGN OF SHĀPŪR II: THE CULMINATION OF SASANIAN POWER

Likewise, it would seem that many later institutions were organized, if not founded, in the early Sasanian period. It is true that many scholars have discounted the later Sasanian practice of attributing all changes in the state or society, especially in the time of Khusrau I, to mere revivals of conditions obtaining under the founder Ardashīr. None the less, under the early Sasanians much of the groundwork for the future was established. For example, the authority over political and economic affairs of the heads of various religious minorities, famous as the *millet* system of the much later Ottoman empire, seems to have been organized by the early Sasanians, as well as the tax system applied to minorities.[1] Both the organization of the state church and the fixing of the political and tax structure of the Sasanian state were the results of great endeavours under the early Sasanian rulers.

The events following the death of Hormizd II are obscure, but one of the sons of Hormizd, probably called Ādhurnarseh, came to the throne. The nobility, however, took matters into their own hands, deposed the king and seized some of his brothers, although one, Hormizd, escaped and fled to the Romans. The crown was then given to an infant Shāpūr II. The fact that another son of Hormizd II, also

[1] Cf. many articles of the late Yu. A. Solodukho, e.g. in *VDI* xx (1947. 2), 40–51.

called Shāpūr, the king of the Sakas, is attested in two inscriptions from Persepolis, as well as the mention of an Ardashīr, king of Adiabene and brother of Shāpūr, in the Syriac acts of Christian martyrs, suggests that there may have been two factions in the family of Hormizd II, and the nobles supported the one which brought to power Shāpūr II.[1] Shāpūr II was to rule from 309 to 379, the longest time-period of any Sasanian king, and under his reign Iran developed greatly and expanded.

Although the nobility from time to time during the Sasanian empire showed its power, on the whole the importance of the ruler and the centralization of authority continued. The ultimate dependence of the bureaucracy, of the legal system, and indeed of all institutions of the state on the person of the ruler is revealed in the acts of the Christian martyrs, as well as in later Arabic and Persian texts. The reign of Shāpūr II can be considered the culmination of the process of centralization under the early Sasanian kings. At first, as a child, he was under the sway of the nobility, but soon Shāpūr was able to bring power into his own hands with the acquiescence of the same nobility. For the supreme rights of the ruler were recognized as having precedence over all. It is interesting to compare the same tendencies in the late Roman empire, for in Byzantium the bureaucracy and centralization, as well as autocracy, could be compared easily with the Sasanian empire. We do not know whether the administrative reforms of Diocletian and Constantine had any echoes in Iran, but most likely their spirit did have some repercussions even though they cannot be pin-pointed.

The mechanism of succession to the throne, and the part played by the nobility and priesthood, may be examined briefly. Down to the end of the dynasty a member of the family of Sāsān was the ruler, and the allegiance of the nobles and priests could rarely be won by a rebel who was not a Sasanian prince. The case of Bahrām Chōbīn (see below) was unique, and he ultimately failed to secure the support of the nobility against Khusrau II. Although a strong ruler in reality would designate his own successor, and secure the support of the priesthood and nobility for the succession before his own death, none the less, the support of these two classes was always necessary for accession, for the crown prince had to satisfy them by his qualities of mind and

[1] For the Persepolis inscriptions see Frye, "The Persepolis Middle Persian inscriptions from the time of Shapur II", *AO* xxx (1966), 83–93, and for the Syriac martyr acts see G. Wiessner, *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II* (Göttingen, 1967) p. 206.

body that he was fit to rule. Almost invariably a prior demonstration of ability to rule a province was a prerequisite for mounting the throne of the king of kings. Bahrām Gor had not governed a province, but by his personal qualities he was able to convince the aristocracy that he was that son of Yazdgard I fit to rule. The belief that the *farr* or "mystical majesty" of kingship had descended on a prince would cause nobles to rally to one member of the royal family rather than another. The signs and symbols of the farr were many and varied, and politics undoubtedly also played an important rôle in securing support for the succession.

The priesthood had to be assured that a prospective ruler would follow the Mazdayasnian faith, as the Zoroastrian religion was called. This meant not only adherence to the ritual and the ethics of the state religion, but also to the norms of society in the class structure. In the many books of advice (*andarz*), and on rules of conduct, from Islamic times in Arabic and Persian, one finds the remark that in the Sasanian era religion and state were twin sisters, and the duty of the ruler was to support the religion. The future rulers of the Sasanian empire were, of course, instructed in the worship of Ahura Mazda, and taught the requirements of religion, as well as the arts of riding, archery and the like. In the years of the earlier Sasanian state the ruler appointed priests and bestowed titles on them, but later, perhaps already by the time of Shāpūr II, the chief priest, the *mobadān-mobad*, created on the analogy of the title king of kings, took over such ecclesiastical tasks as religious appointments. The mobadān mobad also performed the act of coronation, placing a crown on the head of the new ruler. Firdausī describes this frequently in the *Shāh-nāma*.

The time and day of coronation were determined by astrologers, astronomers and soothsayers, all of whom were important personages at any court of antiquity. The day of coronation might be postponed a long time in waiting for an auspicious day. In any case, it did not coincide with the day of accession to the throne; this has caused great uncertainty in the dating of the reigns of some Sasanian rulers. The celebrations at the time of coronation included much feasting and entertainment, and the ruler presented money or precious objects to the nobles and to the army.

Each Sasanian monarch had a distinctive crown, or even more than one (fig. 1).[1] The crown and the mace (Persian *gurz*) were two of the symbols of royalty. There is not space here to go into the details of

[1] [See ch. 9, pp. 324ff. for details, and pls 25–30 (3).]

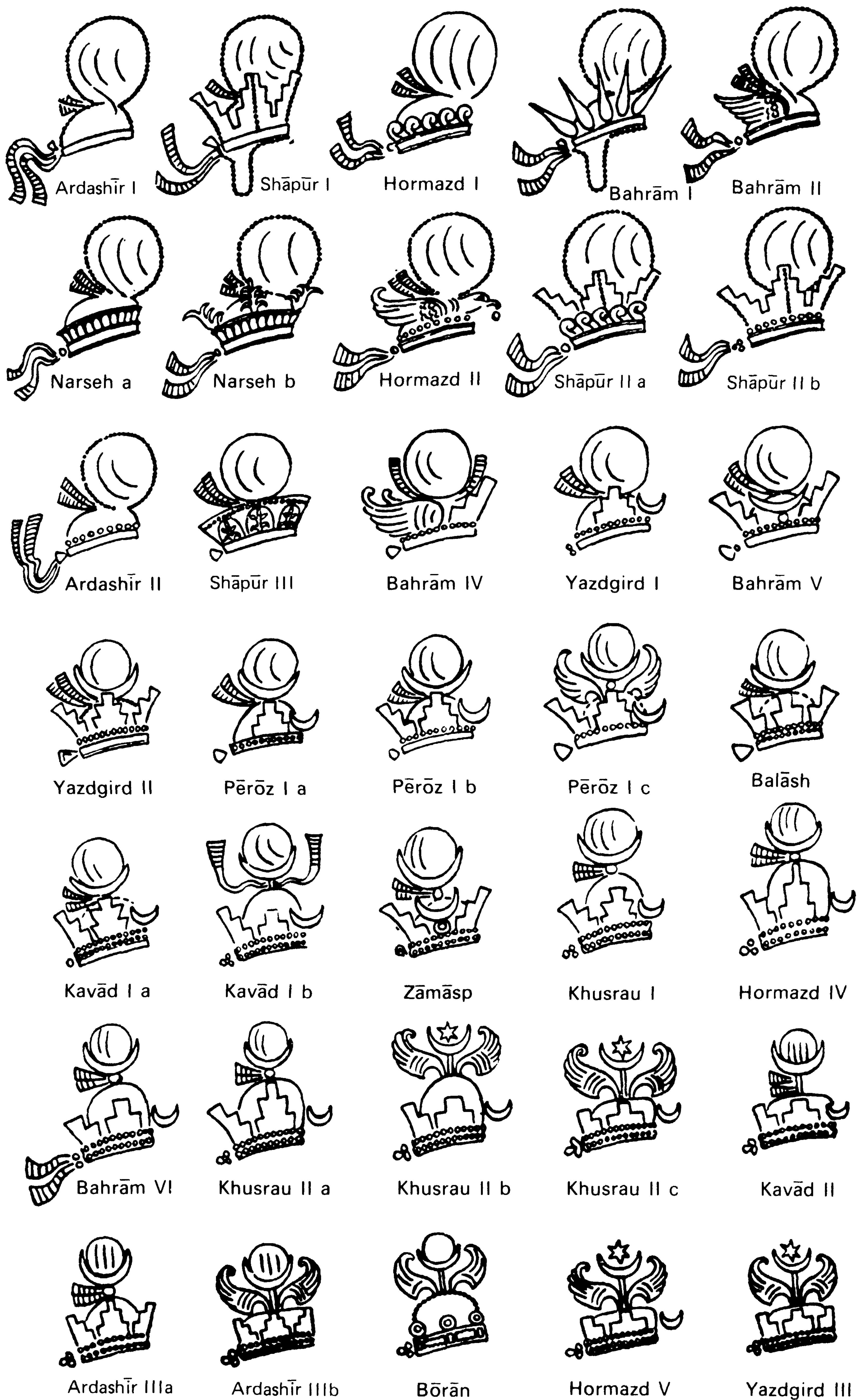


Fig. 1. The crowns of the Sasanian kings as found on coins and reliefs.

the coronation ceremony. Suffice it to say that traditions of kingship in the Sasanian state were both varied and ancient.

The ruler was regarded as chosen by God with a divine right to rule, but this did not make him an unapproachable divine figure. Many stories are told by Firdausī about the sense of justice of the Sasanian kings. Access to the throne by the poorest subject was an old tradition in Iran, and on festival days such as Norūz and Mihragān, the king listened to complaints in open audience. The ruler was regarded as the protector and impartial judge of all of his subjects, and the ancient traditions of law in Iran can be compared with the rôle of law in the Roman empire. The ruler with all his power had to submit to the laws as everyone else. Since the privileges of the nobility and clergy were established and accepted by all, the ruler had both to respect them and to defend them. Thus the very structure of society in Sasanian times imposed limits on the monarch's power and duties to his subjects.

The power of the rulers was great in the third century, but in the fourth, until Shāpūr II reached manhood, the nobility and priesthood held sway. Khusrau I, in the aftermath of the Mazdakite troubles (see below), reorganized the nobility. In the 7th century the prestige and powers of the ruler had sunk so low that the monarchs were mere puppets in the hands of the nobility. Undoubtedly this contributed much to the decline and fall of the dynasty, but this is a later story, and we must return to Shāpūr II.

Among the events of Shāpūr's reign were his early expeditions against the Arabs of the desert, where he is supposed to have filled their wells with sand to bring them to submit.[1] Shāpūr penetrated far into Arabia; how far is unknown. An indication of local recalcitrance to imperial rule was the revolt of the city of Susa later in his reign. Shāpūr not only suppressed the revolt but he caused elephants to trample the remains of the city.[2] Then he rebuilt the city with the aid of Roman prisoners, as Shāpūr I did at Gundēshāpūr, and he renamed the city of Susa Īrān Khwarrah Shāpūr ("Iran's glory [built by] Shāpūr"). This title was confused with a similar title given to the town of Karkha de Ledan (the Aramaic name of the city) north of Susa, until Karkha was later renamed Īrān āsān kar(t) Kavād.[3] Other cities were founded or refounded by Shāpūr II, among them Nīshāpūr in

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 56.

[2] Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* (Berlin, 1922), p. 37; *Sozomenus* 2. 14.

[3] This reading, found on seal impressions, is more likely than *kir* for the passive *kīrīd*. The meaning would be "Kavad made Iran peaceful" (not "easy").

Khurāsān. So Shāpūr II was a worthy successor of his namesake in his building as well as his martial activities.

It was inevitable that the new Sasanian ruler would seek to regain territory lost to the Romans by his predecessors. Armenia was also involved, but, as usual, we have no accurate details of events. In any case, it was Shāpūr who broke the long peace between the two empires, and the main field of battle was Mesopotamia. It seems that the nephew of Constantine, a certain Hannibalianus, had had some success in Armenia when Constantine died in 337.

The system of fortresses and *limes* erected primarily by Diocletian in the Roman province of Mesopotamia and in the Syrian desert proved to be a strong bulwark against the Persians. The Roman defences were rendered even stronger by the roads, wells and caravan-sarais erected behind the forts, castles and walls, enabling soldiers, especially horsemen, to move with speed to an area of invasion. This is not the place to discuss the military reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, except to say that for the defence of the frontiers they provided various trained troops, which Shāpūr on his expeditions met to his discomfiture. Several sieges of the Roman fortress city of Nisibis ended in failure for Shāpūr. A number of minor battles were won or lost but no decision was reached, and Shāpūr had to end operations on his western front to meet an invasion of new nomads in the east. These were the Chionites, who, to judge from their name, represented the first appearance of Hunnic peoples in the Middle East. They were probably Altaic-speaking (proto-Turkic-speaking?) nomads mixed with Iranians, remnants of the Sarmatians and others, who adopted the local Kushān–Bactrian language after they settled in the northern part of the Kushān domain in the east. Shāpūr was successful in containing the Chionites, who even concluded an alliance and gave him aid in his wars against the Romans.

After successes in the east Shāpūr turned again to the Romans, his principal enemies. Fortunately we have an eyewitness account of some of the martial activities between the two empires in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus. In the face of Shāpūr's advance a scorched-earth policy was followed by the Romans, but Shāpūr was able to defeat them and lay siege to the Roman fortress of Amida, present-day Diyārbakr, which he took in 359 after much difficulty. Other towns were captured and their populations taken to Khūzistān and elsewhere in the Sasanian empire. The Romans took up this challenge when the emperor Julian led an impressive force against Shāpūr in 363. A large

detachment was sent to join the Armenians east of Carrhae, so both would march parallel to Julian who, with the main body of troops, descended the Euphrates river to Ctesiphon. In a combat Julian the Apostate was mortally wounded, and after his death the new emperor, Jovian, found his army in a disadvantageous position. Peace was made by which Shāpūr obtained most of the former Roman possessions east of the Tigris as well as the cities of Nisibis, Singara and others. Armenia was also abandoned by the Romans and was soon conquered by Shāpūr who treacherously seized and blinded the king of Armenia. Pap, the son and successor of the blind king, incurred the enmity of the Romans and a few years after the death of his father, Pap was killed by them. Afterwards, Shāpūr sought to come to an agreement over Armenia with the emperor Valens, but this was not possible until the invasion of the Goths in the Balkans near Constantinople distracted the Romans. Then the Sasanians took the lion's share of Armenia, while the Romans had to be content with a small area mainly around Mount Ararat. Armenia, however, continued to remain a bone of contention between the two empires.

Under Shāpūr II a number of innovations appeared in the Sasanian empire. Unfortunately in the sources the two Shāpūrs are frequently confused, and activities of Shāpūs II are frequently attributed to Shāpūr I, more than vice versa. The earlier Sasanian rulers may have begun to erect fortifications against the Romans in Mesopotamia, and against nomadic enemies north of the Caucasus, but Shāpūr II extended the system of defence, probably in imitation of Diocletian's activities in building the limes of the Syrian and Mesopotamian frontiers of the Roman empire. Islamic writers attribute to Shāpūr II the line of forts, walls and probably moats or ditches situated in Iraq on the edge of the desert and called *khandaq Sābūr*. Just as the Romans settled *limitanei* on their frontiers, so Shāpūr settled Arabs in Iraq as a permanent defence force against other Arabs of the desert, especially those allied with Rome. We have no information about Shāpūr's efforts to repel invaders from the Caucasus region, but we may assume that the famous wall of Darband, if not begun by Shāpūr, at least was the result of his efforts at fortification in the north. The system of Roman limes must have impressed the Sasanians for it stopped Shāpūr's strenuous efforts to repeat what his great-grandfather Shāpūr I had done. And this was in spite of the fact that the army of Shāpūr II probably was better organized and more disciplined than under previous monarchs.

In addition to the limes and system of forts built by the Sasanians, mainly to halt raids by the desert Arabs, either brigands or allies of the Romans, there were a number of buffer states at the beginning of Sasanian rule. These became absorbed into the central state in the course of time, such that by the 7th century even the buffer state of the Arab Lakhmids of Ḥīra was gone. The end of the buffer states may have weakened the Sasanian state at the time of the Arab conquests, for the imperial forces had to bear the brunt of the first attacks. In the 3rd century such client states as Adiabene, Arabistān (in the north-east Syrian desert), and of course the Lakhmids, played an important rôle in Sasanian–Roman relations, perhaps comparable to Palmyra on the Roman side.

Just as in the Roman empire, the client states were taken over by the central government, and in their place the fortified cities of the frontier and the limes were organized into a defence system. In the long series of wars between the Sasanians on one side, and the Romans followed by the Byzantines on the other, the frontier remained more or less constant in upper Mesopotamia. It is true that sometimes Nisibis, Singara, Dārā and other cities of upper Mesopotamia changed hands, but the stability of the frontier over centuries is remarkable. Although the possession of frontier cities gave one empire a trade advantage over the other, one has the impression that the blood spilled in the warfare between the two states brought as little real gain to one side or the other as the few metres of land gained at terrible cost in the trench warfare of the First World War.

Shāpūr II was noted for his religious persecution, mostly of the Christians but also of Jews and Manichaeans. Christianity had expanded into Iraq already under the Arsacids, but the large numbers of prisoners brought from Antioch and elsewhere by Shāpūr I, and settled by him in areas such as Khūzistān, had increased the numbers and activities of Christians in the Sasanian empire. Bishoprics existed not only at Ctesiphon but at Gundeshāpūr, Bīshāpūr and elsewhere. While the Christians in northern Mesopotamia and especially in Adiabene, which had had a Jewish ruling family in Parthian times, were early converted by missionaries from western centres of Christianity, those of Khūzistān and Fārs provinces were mostly descended from war prisoners settled by royal decree. Shāpūr II needed money for his army to attack the Romans, so among his taxes those on Christians were doubled to provide extra revenues. The Christians naturally objected and the

persecutions began. They lasted from 339 until the death of Shāpūr II in 379, and the fact that the Romans, chief enemies of Shāpūr, were Christians did not help the Christians in the Sasanian empire. The three centres of Christianity in the Sasanian empire, Ctesiphon, Adiabene and Khūzistān, suffered the most and fortunately we have the Syriac acts of martyrs from these areas, which *inter alia* give interesting information about Sasanian titles and offices.

Under Shāpūr II the process of the establishment of church–state relationships seems to have reached its culmination. The Zoroastrian church was now fully identified with the monarchy and yet the church had its separate place in society with a hierarchy of its own. Just as in the case of the Ṣafavid state so much later, the initial supreme position of the ruler as head of both church and state in the Sasanian empire had become modified by a strong and well-organized clergy on the one hand, and a class-conscious nobility on the other. The "great mobad" is mentioned many times in the acts of the martyrs from Shāpūr's time, and other religious offices are also mentioned, indicating that by this time the religious organization which lasted until the end of the empire had been formed. It was during the reign of Shāpūr II that the mobad Ādhurbad son of Mahraspand is supposed to have submitted to the ordeal of having molten metal poured on his chest and to have emerged without harm; thus he vindicated the efficacy of following the good religion of Zoroastrianism in opposition to other religions.[1] It would seem that orthodoxy was given a great boost by Ādhurbad, for we have some of his writings in Pahlavī still preserved and the Zoroastrian tradition considers him most highly. Heresies, among them time-speculation or Zurvānism, were combatted by the orthodox clergy with the approval of Shāpūr.[2]

Arabic sources as well as Agathias (IV. 26) say that Ardashīr II, successor to Shāpūr II, was his brother, but this seems most unlikely, for he would have been very elderly. Some scholars have speculated that Shāpūr II is confused for Shāpūr III in the sources, which is also improbable. Another Shāpūr, a son of Hormizd II like Shāpūr II, as mentioned above, is attested by his Middle Persian inscription at Persepolis. This was Shāpūr the king of the Sakas, of Sind, Sistān and Tūrān, up to the edge of the sea.[3] It is possible that Ardashīr II

[1] See R. C. Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi* (London, 1956), p. 98.

[2] Cf. M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians; Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London, 1979), pp. 118–19, who considers both Shāpūr II and his high priest Adurbād ī Mahrspand defenders of Zurvanism.

[3] See Frye, "The Persepolis Middle Persian inscriptions", p. 84.

was the son, or less likely the brother, of this Shāpūr rather than of Shāpūr II. The practice of calling various children by the same name, or with slight variants, exists in other parts of the world, but here it can be very confusing to the historian. If Ardashīr II was not the son of Shāpūr II, as was his successor Shāpūr III, then we may postulate several factions among the nobility and clergy in the empire at this time, since one would expect a father-to-son succession if all were tranquil. Moreover any speculation that the relief attributed to Ardashīr II in Ṭāq-i Bustān represents a northern Iranian predominance (either political or religious) as opposed to Fārs, where the earlier kings have their rock-carvings, is vain. Also any supposition that this implies a religious division between north and south is unwarranted. Whatever the relationship of Ardashīr II with Shāpūr II, his reign was short, and he was deposed after less than four years' rule by the nobility because of his tyranny towards them, according to Islamic sources.

Ardashīr II was succeeded by Shāpūr III, a son of Shāpūr II, as we know from a Middle Persian inscription of the former at Ṭāq-i Bustān. Shāpūr III ruled from 383 to 388 and was praised in the Islamic sources as being mild and well disposed towards the nobility. None the less he was either murdered or his tent fell on him killing him.

During the reign of Shāpūr III Armenia again became a bone of contention between the Roman and Sasanian empires. Since the time of the successes of Shāpūr II Armenia, Georgia and Albania had remained "vassal states" of the Sasanian empire. The defence of the passes over the Caucasus against nomad invaders was imperative for the Sasanians, which is one reason why they were so sensitive about their northern frontiers. From time to time they shared expenses of the defence of Darband and the north with the Romans, who also did not desire invasions of their Anatolian provinces. We have mentioned that a small part of Armenia remained outside Sasanian influence, and the emperor Theodosius evidently sought to increase the domain of the Roman protégé in Armenia by sending an army to his eastern frontier in the year 383 or 384. Hostilities, however, did not occur. Rather embassies passed between the two great empires, and an agreement was reached to readjust the boundaries of the two Armenias. Artashes, the ruler of the Roman part, was killed in a conflict, and the Romans appointed a new ruler with a new title *comes Armeniae*, which confirmed the virtual annexation of this part of Armenia to the Roman

empire.[1] The largest part of Armenia remained under an Armenian king of the Arsacid dynasty, but as a vassal of the Sasanians until 428 when Bahrām V, at the request of some Armenian nobles, dethroned Artaxias son of Vramshapuh, and installed a Persian *marzbān*.

There is an interesting notice in the Armenian history of Faustos of Byzantium relating to this time regarding Persian wars with the Kushāns to the east.[2] He says that the king of Persia (Shāpūr III or Bahrām IV) fought against the great king of the Kushāns, an Arsacid who resided in Balkh, but the latter won. This would indicate that the successors of Shāpūr II had to fight in eastern Iran against a ruler who called himself the great king of the Kushāns, and was moreover related to the Arsacid dynasty of Armenia. That the word Kushān is being used in a general sense is revealed by other Armenian authors who later identify the Kushāns as Huns or Hephthalites.[3] The relationship between the Arsacid kings of Armenia and the Kushān rulers is mentioned by other Armenian authors but not in non-Armenian sources. Intermarriage between the royal houses, however, is not to be excluded.

The Sasanian empire not only had hostile relations with the Romans to the west and the Kushāns and others in the east, but the Caucasus in the north and the province of Gurgān to the east of the Caspian Sea were also sources of disturbance. The Romans and Persians could agree on the need to contain the nomadic tribes north of the Caucasus but sometimes the defences of Darband were unable to hold the onslaught. About the year 395 bands of Huns came into Armenia and spread as far as Syria and Cappadocia plundering and killing. Both Syriac and Greek sources tell of this invasion which was not opposed since the Roman military forces were concentrated in the western part of the empire at the death of Theodosius that same year. For several years the Huns were active in the Middle East but we hear nothing of attacks on the Sasanian empire. The Huns invaded the Roman empire because of its weakness, and possibly with the connivance of the Sasanians, but more likely they defeated the Persians and devastated the north-western part of the Sasanian empire during their invasion. Information on external relations is lacking for the reign of

[1] For a study of this period with indication of sources, see P. Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Armenien und Rom* (Venice, 1911), p. 167.

[2] *Patmut'iun Hayoc* (Venice, 1933), p. 242, trans. in V. Langlois, *Collection des historiens de l'Arménie* I (Paris, 1880), 298.

[3] [See ch. 5, pp. 211 ff. for a discussion of these peoples.]

Bahrām IV, probably the son of Shāpūr III. Bahrām held the title "King of Kirmān" before he ascended the throne, and although Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī reports that he was vulgar and neglectful, he is generally praised in Arabic sources. He was murdered, however, with an arrow and his son Yazdgard became the ruler in 399.

FROM YAZDGARD I TO KHUSRAU I; TROUBLE ON THE FRONTIERS; AGGRAVATION OF THE ARMENIAN PROBLEM

Yazdgard, according to the Persian tradition, reported by later writers such as al-Jāḥiẓ, was a sinner who "changed the traditions of the Sasanian dynasty, agitated the earth, oppressed the people and was tyrannical and corrupt".[1] This bad reputation has been attributed to the king's reputed persecution of the Zoroastrian priests and his pro-Christian sentiment. The latter probably has been exaggerated, for many of the acts of Christian martyrs from the reign of Yazdgard do not support the view that he was unduly friendly to the Christians. Perhaps his reported friendship for Marutha the bishop of Maiferqaṭ, who was sent by the Byzantine emperor Arcadius on several embassies to Iran, changed the policy of the Sasanian ruler. Yazdgard seems to have been ready to launch an attack on the Byzantine empire, but the embassies served the good purpose of maintaining peace, which was sealed by an agreement in the year 409. There are a number of sources about the life of Marutha, and several say he won the good graces of the Persian king by his ability as a doctor.[2] In any case, one may conclude that the lot of the Christians in the Sasanian empire improved as a result of Marutha's influence.

It was during the reign of Yazdgard that the Christians of the Sasanian empire held a council in the city of Seleucia in the year 410. The council was convened under the patronage of Yazdgard, to use modern terms, and was composed of bishops and other ecclesiastics of the empire. They officially accepted the provisions of the Council of Nicaea. The Council of Nicaea in 325 was the first ecumenical council after the Roman emperor Constantine had accepted Christianity. At this council the heresy of Arianism was condemned. Arius, an ecclesiastic of Alexandria, had refused to recognize the divinity of Christ and his equality with God the Father. The Nicene Creed which

[1] Ahmed Zeki Pasha, *Djahiẓ, le livre de la couronne* (Cairo, 1914), p. 163.

[2] See R. Marcus, "The Armenian life of Marutha of Maipherkat", *Harvard Theological Review* xxv (1932), 47–73, for the sources.

became a statement of Christian belief declared that the Son is of "One Substance" with the Father. In the Sasanian empire, the Christians had not formally subscribed to the decisions of the Council of Nicaea, and there had been no unanimity of opinion on the rules of the church and its organization in Iran. The Council of Seleucia changed this, for it stopped dissensions and quarrels, and created an organized hierarchy and rules for Christians in the Sasanian empire. A certain Isaac, bishop of Seleucia, became head of the church in the Sasanian empire, although he did not live long afterwards; other steps were also taken to organize the church. Towards the end of the reign of Yazdgard some Christians went too far in destroying fire temples and attacking Zoroastrian priests, whereupon they were put to death.[1] None the less in comparison with previous rulers, Yazdgard was tolerant towards minority religions. Yazdgard is said to have married a certain Soshandukht, daughter of the *resh galutha* or patriarch of the Jews in the Sasanian empire, and this improved their position in the land.

An innovation in the relations between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires occurred during the reign of Yazdgard, which was the request of Arcadius that the Persian ruler act as a guardian for his young son Theodosius II. This testament has been considered merely an unimportant though polite gesture, but perhaps at the time it meant more in the eyes of the two monarchs and their subjects. Yazdgard took his charge seriously and at the death of Arcadius sent a eunuch called Antiochus to Byzantium to advise and care for the young emperor, which he did. The sons of Yazdgard, however, did not fare so well after his death. During his lifetime one son, Shāpūr, was sent as king of Armenia to replace the Arsacid king of Armenia, Vramshapuh, who died in 414. Another son, Bahrām, was sent to al-Mundhir, the king of the Lakhmid Arabs at Ḥīra, to be brought up, while the existence of another son, Narseh, is implied in the sources. At the death of Yazdgard his son Shāpūr came from Armenia and ascended the throne. He ruled for a very short time, was killed, and a Sasanian prince from a side line, called Khusrau, was made ruler by the nobles. Bahrām, however, did not accept Khusrau and moved against Ctesiphon with an army primarily of Arabs. Khusrau apparently abdicated and Bahrām V became ruler in 420.

Bahrām is surnamed Gōr "the wild ass" in Islamic sources, reputedly because of his skill in hunting the onagers, and many stories are told

[1] O. Braun, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Munich, 1915), pp. 139–41.

about him. In the early years of his reign Bahrām is said to have devoted so much time to hunting, drinking and women that the affairs of state suffered. He loved polo and music and, according to Firdausī, he brought bands of *lūlīs*, the ancestors of the gypsies, from India to Iran to entertain the people. It is possible that the soubriquet "wild ass" is a folk etymology for an older east-Iranian word for king or leader, since Bahrām was victorious in his campaigns in the east and left a legacy at least in the coinage of Bukhārā.[1] The *dirhams* (drachms) of Bahrām served as the prototype of the later coinage of the oasis of Bukhārā, and the portrait of Bahrām, albeit in debased form, continued to appear on the local coins well into the 'Abbāsid period. This fact is enough to indicate the importance of Bahrām's wars in eastern Iran and Central Asia although the details, as so frequently, escape us. In any case, the wars in the east occurred towards the end of Bahrām's reign, for at the beginning he had difficulties in the west.

Shortly after his accession in 421 the persecution of Christians in the Sasanian empire was resumed, probably at the instigation of Zoroastrian priests. Many Christians fled to the Byzantine empire and Bahrām sought their extradition, but Theodosius II refused. War broke out and the Byzantines were successful in a series of skirmishes. Bahrām sought peace, and hostilities between the two empires ceased in 422. Christians were free to worship in the domains of Bahrām, and the Byzantines agreed to contribute money towards the defence of the pass at Darband in the Caucasus. Since no city had fallen to the army of either opponent there was no change of territory. Shortly after the end of the war the Christians of the Sasanian empire in a synod proclaimed the autonomy and separation of the Persian church from the "western" fathers of the church, which thus took place before the Nestorian heresy.

Bahrām also tried to settle the continuing discontent in Armenia by appointing an Arsacid, Artashes son of Vramshapuh, king of Armenia. After six or seven years the Armenian nobles tired of their ruler and requested Bahrām to remove Artashes. This Bahrām did, replacing him with a Persian governor in 428. The Armenian nobles called *nakharars* on the whole were satisfied with the change since it gave them more power in their own domains, but the Armenian clergy, led by the patriarch or catholicos Sahak, opposed the appointment of a Persian governor or marzbān. Sahak was arrested by the Persians and

[1] Cf. O. Hansen, "Tocharisch-iranische Beziehungen", *ZDMG* XCIV (1940), 161–2.

kept in custody for a few years, then released to resume his ecclesiastical duties. The situation in Armenia was by no means resolved, however, and later revolts brought great distress to the country.

Bahrām was succeeded by his son Yazdgard II in 439, who at once opened war against the Byzantines. Theodosius II, however, did not want trouble in the east, so he sent the commander of his eastern armies, Anatolius, to the camp of Yazdgard and peace was made preserving the status quo, with an additional proviso that neither side should erect any new forts in the frontier areas. Peace having been made in the west, Yazdgard then had to turn to his north-eastern frontier where certain tribes, defeated by Bahrām, had again challenged Sasanian supremacy. The identity of these people is unknown, for the Armenian sources which tell about them simply call them, anachronistically, Kushāns, or Huns who were called Kushāns.[1] The use of the term "Kushān" for subsequent kingdoms in the east was analogous to the Greek usage of "Scythian" for all nomads in south Russia and Central Asia, or the later Byzantine designation of all eastern nomads as "Huns". It is probable, however, that Yazdgard fought against the Hephthalites, for one Armenian author suggests this when he says the Sasanian king in the twelfth year of his reign invaded the land of Itałakan where the king of the Kushāns lived.[2] The Hephthalites are mentioned in Chinese sources as originally having lived in Central Asia. In the fifth century they moved into Bactria and apparently joined some local mountaineers to rule the land. They adopted the local written language, Bactrian (or sometimes called Kushān–Bactrian), written in modified Greek letters. Yazdgard is reported by the Armenian sources to have established his residence for a number of years at Nīshāpūr in Khurāsān so as to be better able to prosecute the war against his eastern enemies. Sasanian forces seem to have been victorious in the east, for Yazdgard turned his attention to Armenia where grave disorders had broken out.

Fortunately we have detailed accounts in Armenian sources of the attempt of Yazdgard to convert Armenia to the Zoroastrian faith. According to them, the prime mover behind this attempt was Mihr-Narseh, the famous prime minister of Yazdgard I, Bahrām Gor and Yazdgard II; he wrote a letter to the Armenians calling upon them to

[1] Elišē, *Vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc Paterazmin*, ed. E. Ter-Minasean (Erevan, 1957), p. 11, and Lazar of P'arp, *Patmut'iun Hayoc*, ed. Ter-Mkrtzean (Tiflis, 1904), p. 86.

[2] Elišē, *Vasn Vardanay*, p. 18.

convert. Mihr-Narseh not only failed but roused many people against his policy, and in 450 an assembly of Armenian priests and princes called by the patriarch Joseph launched a revolt. Some of the Armenian nobles had accepted Zoroastrianism and sided with the Persians, so the result was more a civil war than merely a Persian–Armenian struggle. Requests for aid from the Byzantines were in vain. In a memorable battle in 451 the Christian Armenians led by a noble, Vardan, of the house of Mamikonian, were annihilated and after the battle many Armenian priests and nobles were led into captivity in Iran. Several ecclesiastics were martyred in captivity and the land of Armenia was ruled by Persian marzbāns. The battle of Avarair became a landmark in the history of Armenia, remembered with emotion by Armenians to this day.

Christians other than Armenians in the empire also suffered from persecutions and impositions, although there was no overall attack on them as in the time of Shāpūr II. Several of the Syriac acts of martyrs incidentally mention the persecution of Jews by Yazdgard. The last years of the king were devoted to more struggles with nomads to the east of the Caspian Sea and with the Hephthalites. Yazdgard died in 457 without having pacified the eastern frontier and leaving two sons to contest the throne.

Although the sources disagree as to who was the elder brother, it was probably Hormizd, who, in any event, became the ruler. Pērōz, his brother, secured the aid of the Hephthalites, however, and marched against the king. In battle Pērōz was victorious and became ruler. During the war between the two brothers the Transcaucasian area of Albania proclaimed its independence from Iran, so one of the first acts of Pērōz was to reconquer the rebel territory. He also freed some Armenian nobles who had been imprisoned by his father, and it seemed that the harsh measures of previous reigns might now come to an end.

A long famine caused by a severe drought caused new problems for the Sasanian state, and renewed enmity with the Hephthalites proved disastrous for Pērōz. The Byzantine empire was occupied with the Huns in Europe, while the Persians had to meet corresponding migrations of peoples from Central Asia. Pērōz was defeated and captured by the Hephthalites about the year 469. There is confusion in the sources between the names "Hephthalite" and "Kidarite" Huns. Whether they are identical is difficult to decide, but since both designations appear in the time of Pērōz one could assume they were

contemporary rather than one or the other being anachronistic. The word "Chionite" is also used as a synonym for "Hun" in Syriac chronicles, further confusing our view of the situation in the east. The Sasanian monarch had to agree to an onerous peace. His son Kavād was left as a hostage until the Persians paid a large sum of money.[1] Sasanian Iran in effect had to pay tribute to the Hephthalites for a number of years.

Pērōz turned from his defeat in the east to Armenia where a revolt had broken out led by Vahan Mamikonian, a nephew of Vardan. In neighbouring Georgia, too, conflict between Christians and the partisans of the Persians at first brought victory to the Christian nobles. Later the proclaimed king of the Christian Armenians, Sahak Bagratuni, was killed in a battle with the Persians after the Georgian king Vakhtang had betrayed his Armenian allies by making peace with the enemy. Vahan, however, was able to rally the Armenians after most of the Sasanian forces were withdrawn from the country in 482 to aid Pērōz in a campaign to the east of the Caspian Sea. Two years later a Sasanian army was annihilated by the Hephthalites and Pērōz was killed.

The bureaucratic organization of the Sasanian empire was fully developed by the 5th century; we have mentioned the important rôle in government of the prime minister Mihr-Narseh, the prototype of the later Islamic grand vizier. The three great offices of the state may have corresponded, at least in theory, to the three classes of priests, warriors and scribes. The mobadān mobad was the head of the Zoroastrian church; the *hazārbad* or chiliarch was the title given to Mihr-Narseh by Armenian sources, which office was also known as that of the *vuzurg framadār* (the great commander); thirdly the *dar-andarzbad* seems to have been the chief of the bureaucracy or the chief councillor of the court.[2] From the vast number of seals preserved as well as notices in varied sources, we may assume that there was a hierarchy of andarzbads, in districts and provinces. The andarzbad was probably a judicial as well as an administrative officer, a testament to the continuing importance of law in Iran. The administration of the Sasanian empire is discussed in another chapter, but suffice it to say that the proliferation of titles in Sasanian Iran indicates the complexity of the bureaucracy.

The development of Christianity in the Sasanian empire also belongs

[1] According to Joshua the Stylite, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, trans. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), p. 9, the Byzantine emperor contributed to the ransom of Pērōz.

[2] Cf. Elišē, *Vasn Vardanay*, p. 62.

to another chapter, but it was at the end of Pērōz's reign that Nestorianism became the dominant form of Christianity in the empire. This in effect created a "Persian" church, as opposed to the "Byzantine" church, and it was proclaimed in a synod held at the capital city in the spring of 484. The significance of this was a greater possibility for the spread of Christianity in Iran, not as the faith of the Byzantine enemy but as a "national" religion. The anti-monastic policy of the Nestorians for a time caused disorders in the Persian church which, however, little concerned the Sasanian state.

Internal disorders in Zoroastrianism, however, were of concern to the state, but it may be doubted whether there were any serious challenges to the harmony between the religion and the state before the Mazdakite movement which will be mentioned below. The supposed adherence to Zurvānism by Mihr-Narseh and Yazdgard II may have provoked opposition from some priests who were more strictly dualist, but we cannot perceive any influence on the political history of Sasanian Iran. The fact that there was a later Mazdakite crisis, however, points to an earlier background of unrest and uncertainty, not only in the Zoroastrian religion but also in the social fabric of the empire.

The brother of Pērōz, called Balāsh or Valgāsh, was elected king by the nobles, who always showed their influence in the face of weak rulers, or of such a disaster as befell Pērōz. Peace was made with the Hephthalites and a heavy tribute was paid by the Persians. Peace was also made with the Armenian rebels led by Vahan. It was agreed that existing fire temples in Armenia should be destroyed and no more erected and the Armenians were free to practise Christianity without fear of forcible conversion to Zoroastrianism. Furthermore, Armenia was to be administered directly by the Sasanian king and not through a deputy. The Armenians supported Balāsh against a pretender to the throne, either the brother or a son of Pērōz called Zarer. With this aid the rebel was defeated and later captured and killed, so the Armenian nobles stood high in the esteem of Balāsh. At the end of the reign of Pērōz, or at the beginning of the reign of Balāsh, Nestorianism was established as the *sole allowed* sect of Christians in the Sasanian empire. Balāsh, in spite of his good intentions, seems to have fallen victim to a conspiracy of nobles who in 488 deposed him in favour of Kavād, son of Pērōz.

Kavād had lived with the Hephthalites as a prisoner or hostage, and it is highly probable that they actively assisted him to obtain the throne.

Early in his reign the prime minister Zarmihr, or Sokhra as he is also called, who probably was instrumental in deposing Balāsh, was murdered at the instigation of Kavād. This event caused resentment among some of the great nobles and Kavād's position was consequently weakened. According to a Syriac chronicler, certain Arab tribes, the Armenians and others caused trouble for Kavād during his first reign.[1] But the greatest problem for the empire was the sect of the Mazdakites, about whom much has been written.

In his doctrines, Mazdak seems to have followed a form of Manichaeism though he adhered to Zoroastrian rituals. We know very little about the life of Mazdak, but he may have been a Zoroastrian priest, possibly with Manichaean sympathies. As an avowed Manichaean or arch-heretic he hardly could have obtained the influence he did. His admonitions against violence and harm to others were coupled with a call to a sharing of possessions, a primitive communism. We do not know how far Mazdak went, for his detractors even accused him of advocating the sharing of wives, which is unlikely. Just how or why the king adhered to, or favoured, Mazdakism is unknown, but most scholars have speculated that he was seeking to counter the power of the aristocracy. There seems little doubt that a desire to ameliorate the condition of the common people also played a rôle in the sympathies of Kavād for Mazdakite ideas. In any case the disorders consequent on Kavād's penchant for Mazdakism evoked a conspiracy of the nobility. We have mentioned rebellions among the Armenians and Arabs, and the refusal of the Byzantine emperor to send money for the defence of Darband; these things exacerbated the situation. Kavād was deposed and put in prison, and his brother Zāmāsp became ruler in 496.

Many stories are told about Kavād's escape from prison and flight to the court of the Hephthalite king, from where, after a few years, he returned to Iran with a Hephthalite army and Zāmāsp surrendered the throne to Kavād without a fight. This probably took place at the end of 498 or the beginning of 499, and it is probable that Zāmāsp was not killed as was usual in such cases. Kavād eliminated the chief nobles who had actively conspired against him, but in general he consolidated his position by clemency. The refusal of the Byzantine emperor to send money to Kavād, again ostensibly as a contribution to the defence of Darband, led to hostilities. Kavād needed money to pay his Hephthalite allies, and he opened hostilities in August 502

[1] *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, pp. 14–15.

in the north-west part of his empire. Theodosiopolis, present Erzerum, was captured by the Persians, and then Kavād moved to the south and laid siege to Amida. After a spirited defence it fell in January 503. The Byzantines reacted by sending several armies to the east and the war moved back and forth with no major victory for either side. In 503 Kavād had to break off operations to meet an invasion of his territory in Transcaucasia. In 504 the Byzantines had the advantage although they could not retake Amida. In 506 peace was made whereby Kavād received some money from Byzantium as a compensation for the Byzantine fortification of the town of Dārā contrary to a long-established agreement between the two empires, but Kavād gave up Amida and other conquests. The treaty was to last seven years but in fact was extended.

Internal affairs occupied Kavād till the end of his reign although the accession of a new emperor in Byzantium, Justin, at first caused a strain in relations between the two states. The Mazdakites continued to flourish but their excesses were held in check by the orthodox priesthood and the nobility, which in reality may have strengthened the hand of Kavād against all opposition. The question of succession worried Kavād for he wished to name his successor himself and not leave the matter to election by the nobility. He had three sons, the youngest of whom, Khusrau, he favoured as his successor. In order to ensure his succession to the throne, Kavād proposed to Justin that he adopt Khusrau as his son and accept the responsibility to support Khusrau as ruler of Iran. But the Byzantine emperor did not want to accept the adoption as Kavād had proposed it, and as a result relations between the two empires cooled.

The end of Kavād's reign internally saw the execution of Mazdak and many of his followers, while externally war with Byzantium was renewed. The crown prince Khusrau reportedly was the instigator of the massacre of the Mazdakites, and several stories are told about this. After the death of Mazdak the heretics, for so they were considered by orthodox Zoroastrian priests, were persecuted and the movement went underground. Their name, however, appears time and again in the sources as the common designation for social revolutionaries. The impact of the Mazdakites must have been great, for their name was not forgotten and they left a legacy for the future, even into Islamic times.

At this time a tribal kingdom was founded in Arabia by the tribe of

Kinda, and its leader Ḥārith b. 'Amr was able to defeat Mundhir III, king of the Lakhmids, and seize his capital Ḥīra. The Kindī occupation of Ḥīra probably lasted only a few years, perhaps 525–8, but the Kindī Arabs had taken over parts of Iraq as early as 506.[1] Events in Georgia also occupied the Persians during the second reign of Kavād. Gurgenes, the king of Georgia, had to fight against his nobility, which sought to limit, if not abolish altogether, the power of their king. The Persians were happy to take advantage of this discord and supported the nobles with an army in 523. The king fled to neighbouring Lazica on the shores of the Black Sea, north-west of Georgia, and the Persians occupied the cities of Georgia. A marzbān ruled the country and Sasanian garrisons were established in the chief city, Mtskheta (near modern Tiflis), and other cities. Persian success in Transcaucasia was matched by the defeat of a Byzantine army in Mesopotamia, in which Belisarius the famous general held a command. In 527 Justin turned over the reins of government to his nephew Justinian, but the war continued in Lazica and on the Mesopotamian frontier, though in a desultory fashion. Belisarius was placed in command of a Byzantine army in the east and instructed to erect forts on the frontier. He was defeated by a Persian force but Justinian instead of removing him from command made Belisarius general of the east. He met the Persians again outside the walls of Dārā and defeated them. In the Caucasus region too the Sasanians suffered several reverses.

Kavād then heavily supported his Arab ally Mundhir of the Lakhmids in a great raid into Syria, flanking the Roman fortifications and Belisarius, with the intention of capturing and plundering Antioch. Belisarius, however, was not surprised and moved to meet the new threat. In a battle at Callinicum in 531 Belisarius was defeated and retreated but the Sasanian forces had lost so heavily that they too withdrew. Kavād only prepared another army under new commanders and sent it into Roman Mesopotamia, with more hope of success, since Belisarius had been recalled by Justinian and sent against the Vandals in North Africa. Nothing was accomplished, however, for the death of the aged Kavād brought an end to hostilities. The new ruler Khusrau was to become the most illustrious of the Sasanian rulers, comparable to Shāh 'Abbās in Ṣafavid times.

[1] G. Olinder, *The Kings of Kinda* (Lund, 1927), pp. 58–65.

KHUSRAU I AND HIS REFORMS; REVITALIZATION OF THE EMPIRE

The reign of Khusrau I, or Khusrau Anūshīrvān ("of immortal soul"), began with a revolt of his brothers and some discontented nobles, but the new ruler was able to suppress it and unite the nobility and religious leaders behind him. He had to repair the damage to society wrought by the Mazdakite movement, so he made peace with the Byzantines in 532, on condition of the Persians evacuating several fortresses in Lazica and the Byzantines paying Khusrau to maintain the Caucasian defences. Reforms of taxation and internal administration occupied the new ruler for a number of years.

The Mazdakite disorders had disrupted not only the collection of taxes but also the titles to land. The need for reform, however, was of long standing and the social upheaval brought on by the Mazdakites only enhanced an already archaic system. Kavād had initiated the reform by surveying and measuring the land, but this had not been finished at the time of his death. The cadastre was finished by Khusrau, but more than land was measured; date palms and olive trees were counted and assessed for tax purposes. Finally individuals were counted for the head tax. The old system of assessing taxes on the produce of the land was not only archaic but unjust, for assessment was made on the harvest, but before it was gathered. This meant that farmers had to wait until tax collectors arrived to assess the harvest, which was sometimes spoiled because of the delay. In Kavād's time the assessment seems to have been made after the harvest had been collected, which was an improvement. The new system of Khusrau did away with the yearly assessment and instead established a fixed tax, the average of several years' harvest. This represented a tremendous advance, since plans could be made henceforth on the basis of the known taxes. The head tax did not apply to the upper classes – clergy, knights and scribes – but rather to men of the common people between twenty and fifty years old. After the reform taxes were collected in money rather than in kind, and payments were made three times a year.

The importance of the new tax system cannot be underestimated since it served as the model for the later caliphate. The resemblance of the tax reform of Khusrau to the Roman *indictio* with the *iugatio* and *capitatio*, as established by the tax reforms of Diocletian, has been noted by several scholars.[1] The result of Khusrau's tax reforms was

[1] E.g. F. Altheim, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt, 1957), pp. 7–55.

that the ruler had a fixed amount entering his coffers every year. The lowlands of Iraq, as had been the case under the Achaemenids, paid the lion's share of the land tax in the Sasanian empire, evidence of the continuing importance of the Tigris–Euphrates area.

Just as significant as the tax reforms were the army reforms of Khusrau. Previously the nobility, from the great to the small, had been obliged to equip themselves and their followers and serve without pay in the army. Khusrau gave the poor nobles, better called knights, equipment and a salary for service in the army. Thus the ruler secured direct support of the military class, and the great nobles who had maintained private armies saw their power drastically reduced. In essence a new social order was created, a new nobility of the robe beside the landed nobility. This was the period of the flowering of the *dehkān* class, the knight who owned a village. The dehkāns became the backbone of Iranian society, as the Arabs discovered after their conquests. Khusrau also settled families on the frontiers with the duty to come to arms and protect the frontier in time of danger. Whether this policy provided the model on which the later Byzantine theme system was based is uncertain, but this is not impossible.

Further, the king divided the empire into four parts and put a *spāhbad*, or general, over each part. The generals of the east, Khurāsān, and of the west, Iraq, were especially important since they respectively had to defend the frontiers against the nomads of the east and the Romans in the west. The Arabs later discovered that the interior of Iran was relatively empty of troops, for the soldiers were concentrated on the frontiers. Once the frontier armies were defeated the way to the interior was opened. No doubt other reforms in the military organization of the empire were undertaken by Khusrau, on which we have no information. The end result, however, was a more efficient army, which shortly was to be put to use against the Byzantines.

Fortunately, we have in Procopius a detailed source for the wars of Khusrau against the Byzantines, as was Ammianus Marcellinus for the wars of Shāpūr II. The causes of the resumption of hostilities between the two empires after an interval of peace were manifold. Certainly the instigation of ambassadors of the Ostrogoths in Italy, threatened by Justinian, and of others, played an important rôle in the decision of Khusrau to open hostilities. He may have feared future aggression from the Byzantines after they had re-established the Roman empire in the west. As usual the Armenians and the Lakhmid Arabs

had grievances against Byzantine subjects, so a *casus belli* was easily at hand. At first Justinian sought to dissuade Khusrau from war but in this he failed.

Khusrau invaded Byzantine territory in 540 primarily in search of plunder. He headed for Syria, flanking at the south the Byzantine defences in upper Mesopotamia. In a short time the Persian army stood before the walls of Antioch. The siege of the city lasted only a few days, for, because of an earthquake a few years before, it was ill prepared to withstand an enemy. The city was plundered and burned, which at once led Justinian to seek peace. With his main forces in the west, the Byzantine emperor had to buy peace from the Persian adversary. A truce was declared at Antioch, but Khusrau returned to his land slowly, waiting for the agreement of Justinian to pay him five thousand pounds of gold as a war indemnity and five hundred pounds annually, ostensibly as a contribution to the defence of the Caucasian frontier. As Khusrau retreated, however, he extorted large sums of money from Byzantine cities such as Edessa and Dārā as a condition of leaving them in peace. At the latter place, he laid siege to the city until the inhabitants paid him a large sum to leave them further unmolested. As a result of these actions, Justinian denounced the truce and prepared to send Belisarius, his victorious general in the west, against the Persians.

Khusrau, on returning to Iraq, built a new city near his capital, a model of Antioch, which he called Veh Antiok Khusrau, ("Better than Antioch [has] Khusrau [built this]"), wherein he settled captives brought from Antioch. This town, forming part of the complex of the capital, was called Rūmagān "town of the Greeks" by the local inhabitants, and al-Rūmiyya in Arabic. Khusrau the following year opened hostilities in Lazica on the Black Sea coast of Transcaucasia. The Persians captured Petra, a Byzantine fortress on the coast, and established a protectorate over the country, which formerly had been nominally under Byzantine rule. In the south Belisarius had a few local successes but he did not have sufficient troops or equipment to take Nisibis or other large, fortified cities. The following year pestilence hindered the activities of both sides. Then Belisarius was recalled by Justinian and sent to Italy. A Roman army suffered defeat in Armenia in 543. Heartened by the prospects of victory, Khusrau in 544 laid siege to Edessa, hoping to incorporate all of the Byzantine trans-Euphrates domain into his own empire. The defence of Edessa is

described in detail by Procopius, and the end was the retreat of Khusrau to his homeland after a remarkable defence of their city by the people of Edessa. A five years' truce was arranged between Justinian and Khusrau with the latter receiving two thousand pounds of gold.

The truce was broken in its fourth year by the Byzantine alliance with Lazica to expel the Persians. A Byzantine–Lazic force besieged Petra, but the city was relieved by a Sasanian army. Later two Persian armies were routed and finally after a memorable siege the strong fortress of Petra was retaken by the Byzantines in 551, and again a five-year truce was concluded between the two empires. Lazica was not included in the truce and hostilities continued there. Finally, the Persians had the worst of the conflict and negotiations were opened with Byzantium in 556 for a permanent settlement. After much discussion and passage of time, finally in 561 a fifty years' peace treaty was signed in which the Sasanians evacuated Lazica and in return received an annual payment of gold. A description of the sealing of the documents, as well as the terms of the treaty, is given by Menander Protektor, a Byzantine historian (in fragment 11 M), and it provides an insight into the diplomatic protocol of the time.

Khusrau needed peace on his western frontiers so he could deal with the Hephthalites in the east. About 557 he allied with the Turks, who had appeared in Transoxiana, under a ruler called Silziboulos in Greek sources, and together they destroyed the Hephthalites and partitioned their territory. It would seem that Khusrau obtained their lands south of the Oxus river, while the Turks ruled over lands to the north. Just how far the Sasanians extended their domains to the east is unknown; it is possible that they penetrated north of the river and then withdrew later when hostilities between Turks and Persians had broken out about 569–70. Whether Khusrau pushed his frontiers into India is also unknown but not likely. It would appear that Kabul and areas to the east were not under Sasanian rule, although short periods of control cannot be excluded. There does not seem to have been a central power holding the Hephthalite princes together in the east.

Another venture of Khusrau at the end of his reign brought Persian arms for the first time to southern Arabia. It is impossible here to discuss the background of the history of southern Arabia and its relations with Ethiopia. The Byzantines, and before them the Roman empire, had an obvious economic interest in Ethiopia and southern

Arabia, controlling as they did the lower Red Sea and trade with India. The spread of Christianity in both lands had established bonds with the eastern Roman empire, so when the two great rulers Justinian and Khusrau measured their strength it was almost inevitable that Arabia would be drawn into the conflict. The Ethiopians, who had adopted Monophysite Christianity as the state religion, in *c.* 522 sent an army across the Red Sea to help their co-religionists who were being persecuted by the Ḥimyarites, the dominant power in southern Arabia at that time. A long struggle ensued in which the Ethiopians and the Christians of southern Arabia naturally were supported by Byzantium, at least morally, but without men or supplies. A certain Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās, reportedly a follower of Judaism, made himself the leader of the non-Christian Arab majority in southern Arabia and drove out the Ethiopians. Yūsuf realized he would need aid against the Ethiopians and their Arab Christian allies, so he turned to Sasanian Iran and the vassal state of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra. Byzantine diplomacy, however, prevented any aid from going to Yūsuf from Iran. Byzantium, on the other hand, then sent ships and supplies to aid the Ethiopians. In 525 the Negus (the title of the ruler of Ethiopia) himself led troops into southern Arabia in a second invasion. The Ethiopians were victorious and Yūsuf was killed in battle. A new Arab king of the Ḥimyarites was installed under Ethiopian overlordship.

In 531 Justinian sent an emissary to southern Arabia to the king of the Ḥimyarites and to the Ethiopians. Procopius (I. 20) tells us that the envoy proposed to the Ethiopians that they take over the trade directly with India, especially of silk, which was so important in the Byzantine empire. The Ethiopians could force the Persians out of this profitable trade. To the Arabs Justinian's envoy proposed that they ally with some nomadic tribes of central Arabia to invade the Sasanian domains. Both hopes of the Byzantines were unfulfilled, but the expedition against Iran was not then necessary, since Justinian and the new Sasanian ruler Khusrau had concluded peace. This was also the period of the fall of the Kinda confederacy in northern Arabia and the growth of Lakhmid power.

Some time between 532 and 535 an Ethiopian general Abraha seized power from the Ḥimyarite king and established an independent state in southern Arabia which he gradually enlarged. Abraha declared his independence from Ethiopia, defeated all opponents and received embassies from Byzantium. Abraha, a Christian, was thus pro-Byzantine

while some of his enemies appealed to Khusrau for aid against him. Nothing resulted from the different power alliances in Arabia and in 569 or 570 Abraha died. This was "the year of the elephant", the year of the birth of the prophet Muḥammad.

In 572 Ma'dīkarib, one of the sons of Abraha, fled from his half-brother, who had become the ruler in southern Arabia, to Khusrau and finally Khusrau moved to support the anti-Byzantine party. The allegiance or sentiments of some of the Monophysite Christians in Arabia changed from a pro-Byzantine position to opposition, since Justin II, who succeeded his uncle in 565, after five or six years of following the policy of reconciliation of his predecessor in vain, turned to a fierce persecution of the Monophysites in the empire. Khusrau sent an army with a small fleet under a commander called Vahriz, together with Saif, son of Abū Murra, to the area near present Aden. The Persians and their allies were victorious, Ṣan'ā', the capital of southern Arabia, was occupied, and Saif became the new king. This happened between the years 575 and 577. Southern Arabia thus became and remained a dependency of the Sasanian empire. But the influence of the Ḥimyarite kingdom of southern Arabia on the rest of the peninsula already had declined, preparing the way for the rise of Islam. The Sasanians, however, were interested in controlling the trade of Byzantium to India and the Far East, which they were now able to do thanks to their position in southern Arabia. About 598 a new and larger expedition was sent under command of another Vahriz, since the ruler of the Ḥimyarite kingdom wished to renounce Persian authority. The Persians were successful in battle; the king was killed and southern Arabia became a Sasanian province headed by Vahriz.[1]

To return to Khusrau, the accession of Justin II boded ill for continuing peace between the two empires, for the latter resolved to end Justinian's payments to certain Arab chiefs, who had agreed to refrain from pillaging Byzantine territory in return for subsidies. Justin also sought to obtain possession of Svanetia in the Caucasus, claiming it was part of Lazica, due to Byzantium by the fifty years' peace treaty, although this matter had not been settled in the treaty. In negotiations in Constantinople the emperor showed such intractability in dealing with the Arabs that the Arab chiefs decided to commence raids on Byzantine territory. War between the two empires did not materialize at this time in spite of the embassy from the western Turks in western

[1] [See for further detail and a somewhat different version, ch. 16, pp. 604ff.]

Turkestan, who came to the Byzantine capital in 568 seeking an alliance between the Turks and Byzantines against their common enemies the Persians and the Avars in the Balkans. Nothing came of this embassy.

Armenia had remained quiet for a long period, but a Persian governor of the family of Suren, who had been appointed by Khusrau about 564, tried to spread Zoroastrianism in Armenia. He built a fire temple at Dvin, an important town near present Erevan, and he put to death a member of the influential Mamikonian family. The result was an Armenian uprising, and Suren and his guard were massacred in 571. The Armenian rebellion fitted in well with the plans of Justin II. He withheld the yearly payment to Persia for the defence of the Caucasus and he welcomed the Armenian rebels as subjects of the empire. An army was sent into Sasanian territory and the city of Nisibis was besieged in 572. The Byzantines were not able to take the city, but retreated in disorder because of the jealousy of the commanders. The Persians, on the other hand, followed the fleeing Byzantine army and invested the city of Dārā in which they had taken refuge. The Persians, after a siege of about five months, received the surrender of the city. Afterwards Persian forces ravaged Syria, and Justin sued for peace.

Justin II had been suffering from a mental illness and became incapable of ruling, so Tiberius, a high Byzantine officer, was named co-ruler in 574. A truce for one year was made with Khusrau, whereby Byzantium paid a large sum of money, but Armenia was excluded from the truce. No real conclusion of peace was reached, however, and in 575 Khusrau invaded Armenia. At first success crowned the Persian arms, and it seemed as though the eastern part of the Byzantine empire would be incorporated into the domains of the enemy. The fortunes of war changed, however, and a strong Byzantine army defeated Khusrau and then occupied Sasanian territory, plundering many localities. Consequently the local population, primarily Armenian, suffered from the Byzantines more than they had from the Persians. The Sasanians, losing heart, were now willing to negotiate a peace in 576. A great victory over the Byzantine army in Armenia, however, interrupted negotiations. In essence, the Persians refused to return Dārā to Byzantium and insisted that certain Armenian refugees be turned over to them, to neither of which points the Byzantine envoys would agree.

In the warfare of 578, a new Byzantine commander, Maurikios or

Maurice, was able to capture several Persian forts and many captives. On the other hand the Armenians had ended their rebellion and a general amnesty from Khusrau brought the land back under Sasanian control. Before peace could be negotiated between the two empires Khusrau died in 579, after a long reign of forty-eight years.

The empire which Khusrau ruled was in its glory, but already showing signs of decay in a spirit of pessimism and decadence prevalent among many of its citizens. The rigid class structure, disturbed by the Mazdakites, had been re-established under Khusrau with strong religious sanctions. Although the power of the great families had been curbed, the boundaries between classes resembled the caste system of India. The lower classes were not flourishing. Khusrau, however, became the prototype of the wise, just ruler for later times, so much so that his personal name for many Arabic authors became the common title for the pre-Islamic Sasanian kings. Thus *Kisrā*, an Arabic deformation of his name, followed the path of Kaiser and Tsar in the European lands, as descendants of Caesar. Even today in Persia the ignorant peasant will ascribe any very old ruin to Kisrā Anūshīrvān. He built caravanserais, bridges, roads and towns, such that under his reign the empire was linked together as never before. To Khusrau is attributed a long wall and series of forts in the plain of Gurgān, built as a defence against the Turks. He is also supposed to have rebuilt the wall and defences of Darband. It would seem that the walls and fortifications in Gurgān, Māzandarān (from the sea to the mountains near Sārī), Darband and Iraq, fitted well with Khusrau's division of the military command in the empire among four army commanders of the four frontiers.

The basis of the wealth of the empire was land and agricultural produce, and the vast majority of the population were peasants, whose numbers if anything increased under Khusrau. We have noted that archaeological surveys in Khūzistān, and of the Diyālā river basin north-east of present Baghdad, have revealed a great expansion of irrigation and of the amount of land under cultivation during the Sasanian period,[1] indicating the strong interest of the government in agricultural matters. One large irrigation enterprise in Iraq was the great Nahrawān canal system which supplied water to a large expanse of fields in Iraq. It seems clear, after investigations in Iraq, that there was also an unprecedented investment of state funds in extending the area of cultivation. Khusrau I developed complex plans for the digging

[1] See Adams, *Land behind Baghdad.*

of tunnels and canals all over the empire, such that never before or since has there been so much land brought under cultivation in this part of the world; the agriculture was extensive rather than intensive. The Zoroastrian religion, of course, regarded the promotion of the cultivation of the soil as a meritorious act, if not a strict duty of the ruler.

Khusrau was a tolerant monarch in regard to religions, for we hear of no systematic persecutions during his reign, although some of his underlings at times showed a too-zealous attitude in regard to minority faiths. In contrast, Justinian was particularly severe on heretics and pagans. In 529 he closed the academy at Athens, which had been a centre of ancient Greek philosophy and culture, and some philosophers took refuge at the court of Khusrau. Although he welcomed them and treated them well, they became homesick, and Khusrau secured a pardon and permission from Justinian for them to return to Athens in one of the peace treaties between the two empires. The Persian monarch maintained at his court Greek physicians and various thinkers, and a medical school following Greek theories, or a primitive university, was established at Gundeshāpūr which lasted into Islamic times. Translations were made into Middle Persian not only from Greek, but also from Sanskrit. One of the most famous native scholars at his court was the physician Burzoe, to whom are attributed many translations into Pahlavī from Sanskrit, including the collection of fables known in Islamic times as *Kalīla wa Dimna* from the Arabic of Ibn Muqaffa', from the originals in the Sanskrit book, the *Panchatantra*. It is quite possible, as suggested by Christensen, that the name Burzoe is simply a short form of Buzurjmihr, a sage who lived in the time of Khusrau.[1]

Khusrau is surnamed "the just" in later Islamic works, and there are a great number of stories extant in Arabic and Persian sources attesting to his popularity, or at least to the great impact he made in Persia. Especially abundant are the collections of *andarz* or "advice", better described as "mirrors for princes", which have survived, relating to Khusrau.[2] In fact there are so many practices and sayings attributed to Khusrau that it is highly probable our monarch has become the receptacle of all novelty and change in Sasanian history, making a determination of which stories are real and which fanciful extremely difficult.

Many Pahlavī books supposedly were written in the time of Khusrau

[1] A. Christensen, "La Légende du sage Buzurǰmihr", *AO* VIII (1930), 108.

[2] E.g. the examples in M. Grignaschi, "Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide" *JA* 1966, 16ff.

I, although it must be remembered that just as in the case of the two Shāpūrs, so the two Khusraus are frequently confused. Some scholars have claimed that the Avestan alphabet was created under the reign of Khusrau I, but more likely it was earlier, possibly in the time of Shāpūr II. We have seen how Khusrau I destroyed the Mazdakites. He also enforced a dualist Zoroastrian orthodoxy on his people, even forbidding religious controversies according to Mas'ūdī.[1] It is safe to assume that the Zoroastrian orthodoxy which we know from the Pahlavī books of the ninth century and later became fixed during the reign of Khusrau.

One might continue to enumerate the achievements of the reign of Khusrau, such as the silver plates and engraved gems in various museum collections, all testimony to the wealth of his reign. The famous building Ṭāq-i Kisrā in Ctesiphon, part of which still stands, impresses everyone with the immense size of the central arch or *aivān*. The structure may date from the beginning of the Sasanian empire and it may have been extended or embellished under Khusrau I. Such matters are the subject for special investigation and can be mentioned here only as evidence of the pomp and glory of the reign of Khusrau "of immortal soul".

The son of Khusrau succeeded him without trouble. Hormizd IV was the son of a Turkish princess who had been given in marriage to cement good relations between the two states. Some Islamic sources follow one tradition and praise Hormizd as being more just than his father, especially with the common folk. Others condemn him as tyrannical and cruel. The Christians of the Sasanian empire considered him friendly and praised his reign. At news of the accession of Hormizd, Tiberius attempted to bring the conflict between the two empires to a close more or less on terms of the *status quo ante bellum*. Hormizd, however, refused to surrender Dārā, even in exchange for several forts in Armenia conquered by the Byzantines. The Persians also wanted a large annual subsidy, but no agreement was reached and the war continued. Maurice proved a capable general and ravaged the northwestern provinces of the Sasanian empire at the end of 579, but in 580 his plans to march to the enemy's capital Ctesiphon failed. In 581 a large Persian army was defeated by Maurice near the city of Constantina in Mesopotamia. The sickness and subsequent death of Tiberius in

[1] *Les Prairies d'Or* (*Murūj al-Dhahab*), tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, rev and corr. C. Pellat, vol. 1 (Paris, 1962), p. 231.

582 caused Maurice to leave the east for Constantinople, and his successor in the field was wholly incompetent. He was defeated in two battles with the Sasanians, and Maurice, the new Byzantine emperor, replaced him with his brother-in-law Philippicus. It would be too tedious to follow the attacks and counter-attacks of the Persian and Byzantine armies in the Mesopotamian theatre of war until 589. Suffice it to say that both sides suffered from the constant warfare with no decisive advantage to either. The war remained as a festering wound for both empires.

It was unlucky for Hormizd that other foes of his took advantage of the exhausting wars with Byzantium. Some Arab tribes raided lower Iraq, but the greatest danger came from the east. The Turks, either at the instigation of the Byzantines, or desirous of plunder, invaded the north-eastern provinces of the Sasanian empire. The sources regarding the battles of the Persians against the Turks and their Hephthalite subjects are confused, primarily because of the legends and tales which developed about the leader of the Sasanian army, Bahrām Chōbīn. There exist in later Arabic and Persian versions many stories about Bahrām, some of them identical to the stories concerning Bahrām Gōr, a confusion common in Sasanian history when two kings or heroes have the same name. It seems that Bahrām Chōbīn, a member of the Mihrān family from Ray and related to the Arsacids, was the commander of the troops of the east, and he decisively defeated the invaders. According to Islamic sources, Bahrām conquered Balkh and crossed the Oxus, where he defeated the enemy army and killed the enemy king in 588 or 589. It is doubtful if the king was the ruler of the western Turks; more likely he was a chief of the Hephthalites, vassals of the Turks, or perhaps only a representative of the great ruler of the Turks. In any case, after his victories in the east Bahrām was sent to the Caucasus to repel an invasion of nomads, quite possibly the Khazars. Here too he seems to have been successful although details are lacking.

Bahrām then was made commander of the Persian forces against the Byzantines and he opened hostilities in Georgia. Again Bahrām was victorious, but subsequently a Byzantine army defeated him on the banks of the Araxes river. This was a signal for Hormizd, who had become jealous of his popular general, to remove Bahrām from office. Bahrām reacted by staging a rebellion, the details of which are given by the Byzantine historian Theophylactus Simocatta. Persian troops in

Iraq sent against the rebels made common cause with Bahrām's army in Armenia, and the combined forces marched on the capital Ctesiphon. Hormizd tried in vain to organize effective resistance against the rebels. The Sasanian aristocracy, however, did not support the son of Khusrau. The religious leaders, too, were not pleased by his tolerance of the Christians and other religious minorities, so the monarch found himself surrounded by enemies. Hormizd had imprisoned many nobles, and now a palace revolt freed them, while the rebels in Ctesiphon seized Hormizd and imprisoned him. The leaders of the overthrow in Ctesiphon were two brothers-in-law of the ruler called Bindoe and Bistām. Hormizd was blinded and his son Khusrau Abarvēz or Parvēz, "the victorious", was raised to the throne. This was in February 590, and some time later Hormizd was put to death.

At first the new king tried to conciliate Bahrām Chōbīn, who was near the capital with his army when the events mentioned above occurred. An exchange of messages produced no settlement, so Khusrau prepared to fight Bahrām. The king marched forth to battle near Ḥulwān, but the two armies did not engage in a major battle. Khusrau saw that he could not hope to defeat Bahrām, so he fled to Ctesiphon and then towards the Byzantine frontier. Bindoe, who accompanied his nephew on his flight, was able to throw off the pursuers sent by Bahrām, but subsequently he was taken prisoner while his king escaped to the west. Khusrau was received by the Byzantine governor of Circesium in March 590 and the Persian monarch sent a letter and then a mission to Maurice requesting his aid against Bahrām. At the same time Bahrām sent emissaries to Constantinople to counter the proposals of Khusrau. According to Byzantine writers, Bahrām offered to give the Byzantines Nisibis and all the Mesopotamian territory to the Tigris, whereas Khusrau offered Dārā, Martyropolis (Maiferqaṭ) and part of Armenia, and promised that he would never again ask for a yearly subsidy. Furthermore, he stressed his royal right to the throne emphasizing the principle of legitimacy. After some debate at Constantinople, the Byzantine emperor agreed to aid Khusrau, so he released Persian prisoners the Byzantines held, sending them to serve under Khusrau, while a Byzantine army was prepared to assist Khusrau to regain his throne.

Bahrām Chōbīn had difficulty in asserting his claims in the empire, since he did not belong to the family of Sāsān, but rather, it seems, was descended from the Arsacid royal house, long extinct. Bahrām realized

that he would have to stop the attempt of Khusrau to regain his throne on the frontier, so he sent a general called Zadespras to hold the key city of Nisibis. But the city of Nisibis had already gone over to Khusrau and the army sent by Bahrām was defeated and the commander killed. The chronology of events is somewhat uncertain, but it seems that Khusrau had to wait six or seven months for the Byzantines to decide what they would do. During this time he sent his uncle Bistām into Armenia to organize resistance to Bahrām. Bindoe, the other uncle, escaped from Bahrām's prison and made his way north to join the growing opposition. In the spring of 591 Khusrau began his march to regain his throne, supported by a Byzantine army under a general called Narses.

The city of Dārā, in Persian hands since 573, was surrendered to the Byzantines, one of the payments of Khusrau for Byzantine support. Another Byzantine army marched from Armenia, and the plan was to catch Bahrām between the southern and northern armies. Bahrām's forces were defeated in Mesopotamia, and by a flanking movement one of Khusrau's lieutenants seized Ctesiphon. Bahrām was a brilliant general, however, and even with inferior numbers he was able to inflict large casualties on his enemies. None the less he was obliged to retreat to Āẓarbāījān and in a decisive battle Khusrau, with his Byzantine and Armenian allies, was able to defeat Bahrām completely. Bahrām fled to the Turks, where he remained for a year until he was assassinated, probably at the instigation of Khusrau.

The life of Bahrām Chōbīn was told in a Pahlavī romance which passed into Persian and Arabic versions. Firdausī gives the essentials of the story of the rise and fall of Bahrām in his *Shāh-nāma*, and the hero is revealed as the heroic prototype of a Persian chevalier or knight. His exploits, greatly embroidered of course, remained in the memories of Persians for centuries. Although he was in the end unsuccessful, his human qualities gave him a greater place in the hearts of his countrymen than the king of kings, as witnessed by the stories.

Khusrau II rewarded those who had supported him and executed his opponents. One of the former, who received many honours and a governorship, was the Armenian Smbat, head of the house of Bagratuni. With regard to his uncles who had supported him, Khusrau was in a dilemma, since they had overthrown his father. He finally seized Bindoe and drowned him, whereas Bistām escaped and raised the standard of revolt in the Alburz mountains. On the plateau Bistām

was able to maintain himself for almost a decade, for the battles with troops sent against him by Khusrau were indecisive. Bistām was able to prolong his resistance in great part because of the support given him by former partisans of Bahrām Chōbīn. So in effect Bistām was a successor of Bahrām. He established his capital at Ray and minted coins, thus showing his claim to rule instead of Khusrau. Finally Bistām was murdered by one of his eastern allies, a Hephthalite or Turkish chief. By 601 Iran was once more united under Khusrau, but it had been weakened greatly by the internal strife.

The territory promised by Khusrau to Maurice was ceded to Byzantium by a treaty in the autumn of 591, and peace reigned between the two empires. The Ghassānid Arabs, clients of the Byzantines in Syria, however, raided Persian territory which caused Maurice to send as his envoy George, the praetorian prefect or commander of the eastern forces of Byzantium, to Khusrau to assure him that the Arabs had acted on their own. Peace was reaffirmed and declarations of continued friendship were so strong that some Armenian writers believed that Khusrau had been converted to Christianity. He had a Christian wife called Shīrīn, and legend also assigned to him as another wife Maria the daughter of Maurice, which was most unlikely. Here again the legend of Khusrau and Shīrīn in Persian poetry had many ramifications. Although the king was himself not a Christian, he did show considerable sympathy to Christians, and he even gave money or presents to Christian shrines. In the writings of Christian authors Khusrau II has received a good name.

Until the overthrow of the emperor Maurice by Phocas in Constantinople, we hear little about Byzantine–Persian relations in this reign, or about the internal affairs of the Sasanian empire. We may presume that Khusrau was occupied with the revolt of his uncle and in consolidating his position. He obviously had to reward the Byzantine soldiers who had helped him to the throne, and some Persians felt he was too friendly to their traditional enemies. Likewise the supporters of Bahrām Chōbīn were not all executed or even removed from office, and many Persians opposed to Khusrau still held positions of authority. Among those who incurred the enmity of the king of kings was Nuʿmān III, the Nestorian king of the Lakhmid Arabs with their capital at Ḥīra. Some sources say that the Arab king had not helped Khusrau when the latter had fled to Byzantine territory and requested Nuʿmān to come with him, but this is unlikely. There were many

reasons, however, for the enmity of the two monarchs, and it seems in the early years of Khusrau's reign hostilities broke out between the Arabs and Persians. Nu'mān was captured by a ruse about 602 and later he died in prison. Khusrau resolved to end the dynasty of the Lakhmids, so in their place a chief of the Ṭayy tribe was made head of the Arabs under Persian control, but with a Persian governor at his side. The new situation disturbed the status quo and bedouin Arab tribes felt free to raid the settled areas of Iraq. A large tribe, the Bakr, allied with other Arabs, met the Persians and their Arab allies in the famous battle of Dhū Qār. The Persians were decisively defeated, which showed the Arabs their strength when united. It also revealed the weakness of the Sasanian defence system on the edge of the desert once the Lakhmids were gone. The old system had not only held the Arabs at bay, but the Lakhmids had also maintained a far-flung hegemony over warring tribes which could have caused much trouble for the Sasanians. The way for the expansion of Islam was indicated by this battle which took place about 604, although the exact year is unknown.

Events in Byzantium overshadowed even the internal affairs of the Sasanian empire. In 602 the Byzantine army in the Balkans revolted and, led by an officer Phocas, marched on the capital. Maurice, finding no support among the populace, fled. He was captured and executed together with his five sons. There are many reasons for the fall of Maurice, but one of importance which concerns us was his persecution of the Monophysites and others in the Byzantine empire who had not conformed to the Council of Chalcedon. Revolts broke out in various parts of the empire at the accession of Phocas. A rumour spread that Theodosius, the eldest son of Maurice, had escaped the massacre and fled to Persia. In the spring of 603 when a Byzantine envoy arrived at the Sasanian court announcing the accession of Phocas, he was thrown into prison. Khusrau had an excellent pretext to declare war on Byzantium to avenge the murder of his old benefactor Maurice.

The city of Edessa refused to recognize the new emperor, so Phocas sent an army to besiege the rebels. In 604 Khusrau marched against the forces of Phocas. The Persians defeated the Byzantine army besieging Edessa, which then opened its gates to Khusrau. It seems that in Edessa Khusrau found a pretender to the throne of Byzantium who was proclaimed as Theodosius son of Maurice, the true emperor, by Khusrau. After a siege of about nine months the town of Dārā fell

to Persian hands and another Byzantine army was defeated. Khusrau then resolved to take advantage of the disorder in the Byzantine empire and expand the Sasanian domains.

One army moved into that small part of Armenia still under Byzantine rule and met with complete success. A marzbān was sent by Khusrau to Dvin, the chief town of Byzantine Armenia, and the Sasanian army continued its campaigns into Cappadocia. To the south Sasanian arms were equally successful, for in 606 the border towns of Amida and Resaina were taken and the Euphrates crossed. Cities of Syria were captured. In Constantinople several plots to overthrow Phocas were discovered and the instigators were executed. The internal quarrels and fighting of political factions, especially the "blues" and the "greens", in the large cities of the Byzantine empire, deepened the chaotic conditions, making it easier for the Persians in their conquests. Meanwhile a new group of rebels against Phocas seized North Africa and after a short struggle established their control over Egypt in 609. In 610 the rebels reached the capital and Phocas was deposed and executed. Heraclius, the chief of the rebels who had come from North Africa, was crowned emperor, but soon he would have to face a great Persian threat even to the capital.

In 610 Persian forces had again crossed the Euphrates and captured Circesium and other cities. Heraclius sent an embassy to Khusrau to make peace but Khusrau had resolved to continue his conquests. The Sasanian army from Armenia had occupied Caesarea Mazaca, the chief city of Cappadocia, but in 611 a new Byzantine army sent by Heraclius drove their enemies out of the city. Heraclius took command of the Byzantine armies himself but the Sasanians proved too strong. In 613 Heraclius sent an old Byzantine general, Philippicus, into Armenia while he moved to the south. In this area, however, Sasanian arms were triumphant near Antioch. Shortly afterwards they captured Damascus, and to the north they defeated the Byzantines near the Cilician Gates, capturing Tarsus. Philippicus was forced to retreat from Armenia, so on all sides the Persians were victorious.

The following year a Sasanian general Shahrbarāz took Jerusalem after a short siege. The true cross was taken to Ctesiphon as part of the booty. In 615 the northern Persian army under the command of a general called Shāhīn marched through Anatolia to Chalcedon, opposite the capital. Attempts to make peace failed and the Persians continued their conquests of various towns in Anatolia. Meanwhile bands of

Slavs and the Avars devastated the Balkan provinces and Greece. It seemed as though Heraclius was faced with an impossible task to regain the lost Byzantine possessions. In 617 the Avar king reached Constantinople, so the capital was caught between the Avars on the European coast and the Persians on the Asiatic coast.

In the spring of 619 Persian troops entered Egypt and besieged Alexandria, which soon fell. The patriarch and the governor of Egypt fled to Cyprus and the entire country was occupied. Thus the main source of grain for the capital was cut off. Heraclius resolved to leave Constantinople for North Africa where supplies and men might provide a better base for the reconquest of the empire, but the people of the capital persuaded him to remain. The situation remained critical.

Khusrau had in effect re-established the Achaemenian empire, but he had not annihilated his enemy. Heraclius instituted a number of radical reforms, including dividing the empire into large military zones, the theme system, each under a military chief. This meant that native military units would become the chief support of the state rather than mercenaries, although many Slavs, for example, were settled in Anatolia to work as farmer-soldiers. The church contributed gold and silver, and Heraclius opened a crusade or holy war against the enemy. The Byzantines controlled the seas, not only because of their vastly superior naval power, but because of the excellent training of their crews, the use of Greek fire and general technical superiority. This enabled Heraclius in April 622 to sail into the Black Sea with an army and to launch an expedition into Armenia, thus outflanking the Persians. The Persians followed Heraclius but in a battle they were decisively defeated. Consequently Asia Minor was cleared of Sasanian troops.

The Avars were constrained to peace by the payment of tribute on the part of Heraclius. Attempts to make peace with Khusrau failed, and in a bold stroke Heraclius again invaded Armenia in the spring of 623. Shahrbarāz and Shāhīn were both sent by Khusrau against Heraclius, but the latter was able to penetrate Āzarbāījān where he captured and plundered the Sasanian sanctuary and fire temple at Ganzak. Then he retired northward to winter quarters. The following year Heraclius defeated several Persian detachments but no decisive victory was secured. The Byzantine emperor, however, did re-establish his authority in Anatolia. Khusrau was persuaded that only a bold stroke against Constantinople would end the war, so he entered into

negotiations with the Avars to make a joint attack on the capital. Both Shahrbarāz and Shāhīn were to co-operate with the Khan of the Avars and his allies of Slavs, Bulgars and others. Able use of Byzantine sea power rendered the co-operation of the Persians and Avars ineffectual, and, in short, both enemies of Byzantium were defeated.

Meanwhile Heraclius had not returned to the capital, but instead he built up his army in the Caucasus region and made an alliance with the Khazars. In the autumn of 627 the allies advanced southward against the Persians, spreading destruction in Āzarbāījān. Not meeting any strong opposition, Heraclius resolved to cross the mountains to the plains of Mesopotamia. The Khazars withdrew but Heraclius pushed on until he camped near the ancient ruins of Nineveh, where in December he defeated a Persian army which had followed him. Khusrau at once ordered the recall of the Persian army, commanded by Shahrbarāz, from Chalcedon. But Heraclius moved on Dastagird, where Khusrau had a palace, and was waiting for him. Khusrau, however, lost heart and fled to Ctesiphon, while Heraclius occupied and plundered Dastagird where he found enormous treasures. Then Heraclius withdrew and retraced his steps, going into winter quarters.

DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

Meanwhile Khusrau was looking for scapegoats for his defeat, and among others he decided to execute Shahrbarāz. Before he could carry out this plan a revolt broke out, and Khusrau was imprisoned and murdered at the end of February 628. Shīroe, son of Khusrau, ascended the throne as Kavād II. He had joined the rebels and agreed to the execution of his father. The new ruler at once sought peace with Heraclius and agreed to recall Sasanian troops from Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and western Mesopotamia, and to observe the pre-war boundaries. All prisoners were to be returned, and the true cross and other relics restored. Both sides rejoiced in the termination of hostilities which had bled both empires for so many years.

Shahrbarāz, however, was dissatisfied, and since he was the commander of a large army he was dangerous. But after a reign of less than a year Kavad II died, probably of the plague, and was succeeded by his son Ardashīr III, still an infant. Shahrbarāz decided to seize the throne himself, so in June 629, presumably with the support of Heraclius, he marched on Ctesiphon, defeated the forces of Ardashīr and

killed him and his chief followers. Shahrbarāz ascended the throne, but his rule lasted less than two months before he too was murdered. Another pretender in the eastern part of the empire, a nephew of Khusrau, was also murdered before he could come to Ctesiphon as Khusrau III. Since no sons of Khusrau II were left alive, the nobles raised his daughter Bōrān to the throne, the first woman to occupy this position, but she died after a rule of little more than a year. A succession of rulers followed one another, each ruling only a few months, and we know little more than their names, Āzarmēdukht, sister of Bōrān, Pērōz II, Hormizd V and Khusrau IV. Finally the nobles raised Yazdgard III, son of a certain Shahryār and grandson of Khusrau II, almost the last living member of the house of Sāsān, to the throne in 632. Yazdgard had been living almost in hiding in Stakhr and it was there, in a fire temple called after the name of the first king of the dynasty, that the last king of kings was crowned.

Before outlining the life of Yazdgard, a few words are necessary about the long reign of Khusrau II, the last great monarch of the dynasty. Regardless of the conflicting accounts of his character, the splendour of his reign is recognized by the Arabic and Persian sources. He is supposed to have amassed a great fortune, including a magnificent throne, and his court became legendary for its luxury. The rock-carving of Khusrau II at Ṭāq-i Bustān near Kirmānshāh is an unusual example of a sumptuous hunting party depicted in great detail. Khusrau was a great builder and his palaces in Dastagird, east of Ctesiphon, and in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, supposedly named after his queen, were famous in Islamic sources. Likewise the king's love of poetry and music is attested by the musicians at his court such as the famous Bārbad. That the court of Khusrau had some of the same refined degeneracy of the courts of the old Roman emperors is attested by the Pahlavī text of "King Khusrau and his page", where knowledge of rare foods and perfumes, skill in games and musical instruments, and the like, are mentioned as part of the education of a page.[1]

We have mentioned the tolerance of Khusrau in the early part of his reign towards the Christians, and during his reign the Christian religion spread widely throughout the Sasanian empire. The disputes between Nestorians and Monophysites broke into open conflict several times during his reign. Whereas Nestorianism had been dominant, the king favoured the Monophysites, partly because of his friendship with

[1] J. Unvala, *King Husrav and His Boy* (Paris, 1923), pp. 1–29.

Gabriel, a doctor at court, and also because Khusrau's queen Shīrīn became a Monophysite. At the end of his reign, however, Khusrau sanctioned the persecution of Christians.

Although the Zoroastrian church seems to have been in a state of decadence and decay, Khusrau II built fire temples and probably encouraged the work of further codification of the Avesta. The fixed ritual of Zoroastrianism, however, seems to have discouraged philosophic thought, for there is no evidence of Zoroastrian intellectual activities at the end of the empire. The plundering of the great sanctuary of the Gushnasp fire temple at Shīz by Heraclius must have dismayed and shaken the Zoroastrian clergy. All in all, the reign of Khusrau was noted for its devotion to luxury more than its devotion to thought.

The pretensions of usurpers to the throne have been mentioned, and most of them were generals. We know that at the time of the Arab conquests the marzbāns in Khurāsān were practically independent of the court at Ctesiphon, and one may ascribe this weakness of the state to the results of the reform of Khusrau I, when he divided the empire into four parts, each guarded by a spāhbad. The names of the various local rulers, especially in the east and in the Caspian provinces, at the time of the Arab conquests, indicate the degree to which the Sasanian empire had become a feudal state of landed nobility. This nobility was basically unwilling to rally to the support of the central authority and unwilling to unite in the face of an enemy.

Under Yazdgard III, his chief minister and commander of the central army was called Rustam. The latter tried to rally the Sasanian forces in the face of a united Arab threat, but in 636 the Persians were defeated and Rustam was killed at the battle of Qādisiyya, near Ḥīra. The following year Ctesiphon was occupied by the victorious army of Islam. Yazdgard fled to the plateau, hoping to rally the Persians to oppose the new menace. The treasures of Ctesiphon were sent to the caliph ʿUmar who reputedly displayed the crown of Khusrau in the Kaʿba of Mecca. The Arabs invaded the plateau and in 642 won the battle of Nihāvand, which put an end to the imperial Sasanian army. Yazdgard, fleeing, sought aid on all sides. He had requested Chinese aid in 638 but no one came to help the dying cause. Finally he came to Marv, but the marzbān of Marv, Māhoe, wished to be rid of an unwelcome guest and resolved to seize Yazdgard. The latter fled and hid in a mill where he was murdered. This happened in 651 and marks the end of the Sasanian empire.[1]

[1] For the details of the Arab conquest of Iran see *CHI* IV, ch. 1.

EPILOGUE

The fall of the Sasanian empire has been discussed by historians many times,[1] and the exhaustion of the two empires, the Byzantine and the Persian, after years of strife, frequently has received prime attention as the main reason for the victory of the Arabs. An overall survey of the long relations between the two great empires would strengthen this view.

The Sasanians inherited from the Parthians a legacy of over two centuries of conflict with the western power. With a Sasanian belief in the destiny of Iran to rule over the territories once held by the Achaemenians, it was inevitable that wars between the two great powers would continue. The Sasanians might have to fight on their eastern and northern frontiers, just as the Romans had to hold the *limes* against the Germans and as the Byzantines sought to regain territories in Italy, Spain and elsewhere lost to Germanic kingdoms. But the main opponent, and the only worthy opponent, of each empire was the other. Only between rulers of equal standing could proper treaties be made and affairs satisfactorily regulated. This does not mean that Persians and Romans never broke agreements or engaged in deceit towards the other party, but the Persians and the Romans regarded each other as different from the rest of the world, which was somehow barbarian. For the Persians, the Roman Caesars were the only fitting and equal counterparts of the rulers of Iran. Likewise "the king of kings" was regarded with considerable awe by the Romans. This attitude continued to the time of the Arab conquests.

The Sasanian claim to rule territories extending to the Mediterranean and Aegean seas was an overall impetus to conflict, although usually the Armenian question, conflicts of interest in Georgia and Transcaucasia, or Arab incursions in Mesopotamia would provide a *casus belli*. The Romans, and then the Byzantines, who were regarded as Romans by the Persians, were more on the defensive, more seeking to maintain the status quo than their opponents, although they too were not above offensive acts to extend their frontiers. By the middle of the 6th century, however, the system of defences on both sides of the Mesopotamian frontier had produced what amounted to a stalemate. Both Byzantine and Sasanian diplomacy sought to extend the area of conflict, as well as alliances, far beyond the frontiers of both states. I believe that relations of both sides with the Turks in Central Asia

[1] See in particular S. H. Taqizadeh, *Az Parviz tā Changiz*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1349/1970), pp. 1ff.

and with the Ethiopians and the people of southern Arabia were part of the enlargement of spheres of activity of both empires on a world stage, in one sense a forerunner of the extent of the Arab conquests. Just as in the time of the Achaemenians, at the end of the Sasanian empire ideas of the *oecumene* or world-state were in the air.

Some have argued that the spread of Christianity across Iran into Central Asia and to China was part of this sentiment for ecumenism and even for a universal empire, but Christians were sharply divided at the beginning of the 7th century. The Nestorian Christians of the Sasanian empire, who had broken with other Christians at the synod of Beth Lapat (Gundēshāpūr) in 483 and at later councils, were quarrelling with the Monophysites, just as the Monophysites in the Byzantine empire were quarrelling with the Orthodox leaders in Constantinople. Christianity had made many conversions in the Sasanian empire at the expense of Zoroastrianism, but it was far from becoming the religion of the majority as some scholars have surmised. It is true that Zoroastrianism had become stultified with too much concern for rites and rituals, and the lack of an ecumenical drive such as Christianity maintained, but it was the state church of the Sasanian empire. Unfortunately, its fate was closely bound up with the state, which accounts for its decline or stagnation after the Arab conquests.

The Sasanians did overextend themselves in the brief fulfilment of their ambitions to reconstitute the Achaemenian empire in the last years of Khusrau II, but just as the extended diplomatic activities weakened them, so did their military feats. The Persian forces were too few effectively to hold and rule Egypt, Palestine and Anatolia. Their victory proved hollow, and the subsequent events brought the prestige of the court to the lowest level in the history of the Sasanian empire. The ruler, and his court, provided the sole centre of allegiance and support for the nobility and the people. That allegiance and support were almost gone before the battle of Qādisiyya.

The story of the Arab conquest of Iran to the death of Yazdgard is clear in our now ample sources. Each province and even city had to fend for itself. Unity, a common allegiance and a common cause did not exist, and the inspired Muslim armies conquered the provinces one after the other. It was not a quick and easy conquest, for there was much fighting before the Arabs could claim the land as theirs. Once the imperial Sasanian army was crushed on the plains of Mesopotamia, however, there were no regular, trained troops to oppose the conquerors

until they reached the frontiers of the Sasanian empire in the east, with the military centre of Marv, and in the north at Darband and the frontier of the Caucasus. By that time (Arabs were not settled in Marv until after 665, and they hardly reached Darband before 655) there was no incentive for the frontier troops to fight the conquerors of their homeland. The terms of peace made by the Arab armies with various cities and districts, frequently making smaller demands than the previous taxes paid to the central government of the Sasanians, induced many Persians to submit. It is clear that few subjects of the Sasanian state were concerned about the fate of the court or of the central government; local interests predominated, and the Arabs did not even have to pursue a policy of *divide et impera*, for the divisions already existed. As long as the Arabs left alone local affairs, the change in masters above them had little interest for the local people. They had no incentive to fight for a court which took little notice of them. New masters who exacted fewer taxes than the old were to be welcomed rather than fought. Such was the psychology of many Persians. When the Arabs reached the Sasanian frontier in Central Asia, they found the people no more united among themselves than the Persians, but the Sogdians and Khwārazmians had had long experience in fighting the Sasanians or Turks, and playing off one against the other. They were more proud of their local independence than the people of the Sasanian empire. It was only natural that the descendants of Yazdgard, and those who hoped for a restoration of the Sasanian empire, would turn to the east for possible assistance. Even China itself loomed as a possible haven and support for Sasanian pretenders.

The Sasanians throughout their history had not maintained regular relations with China, for trade had been carried on by middlemen, principally the Sogdians, from their most important centre at Samarkand. Furthermore, during the entire Sasanian period China was neither unified nor did it advance any claims to that territory held in Central Asia under the powerful Later Han dynasty (A.D. 25–220). Warring dynasties kept the Chinese preoccupied with internal affairs until the establishment of a unified government under the Sui dynasty (589–618). But it was only under the T'ang dynasty (618–906) that China once again felt strong enough to extend its influence into Central Asia. The expansion of T'ang China, and the great interest in the west by the Chinese, corresponded with the decline and fall of the Sasanian empire. There had been, of course, some contacts between

Iran and China before the T'ang dynasty. Manichaean and Christian missionaries had brought their doctrines to the Far East, and some traders and soldiers of fortune had made their way from Iran to the distant "Middle Kingdom". But most contacts were through Sogdians and Turks, for Turkic dynasties ruled over parts of China during the period of the "Warring States".

As mentioned above, according to Chinese sources Yazdgard III sent an embassy to China in 638 seeking aid in vain against the Arabs.[1] One of the sons of Yazdgard, called Pērōz, took the title of "king of kings" and sought to enlist the support of the Sogdians and Hephthalite princes in Tukhāristān (now called Badakhshān in Afghanistan) against the Arabs. Chinese sources say that Pērōz sent an embassy to the T'ang court for help, but the Chinese emperor considered the distance too great to offer any effective aid, and the envoy returned to Pērōz without troops or money.[2] The sources report that Pērōz was supported, however, by the troops of Tukhāristān. Pērōz again turned to China for aid about the year 662, but all he received was recognition as a ruler and a promise to investigate the possibility of aid, which did not materialize. Shortly afterwards Pērōz was defeated by the Arabs and finally came himself to the Chinese court where in 677 he requested permission to build a temple in the Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an, presumably a Zoroastrian temple.[3] The date of his death is uncertain, but he left a son who tried to recoup his fortunes in Tukhāristān and Sogdiana against the Arabs but failed. The Chinese court continued to recognize the existence of a ruler of Persia until the middle of the 8th century, but it was only a fiction.[4] None the less, the continuing fiction indicates that hopes for a restoration of Sasanian power, at least in Central Asia or eastern Iran, had not faded among the refugee nobility. Many Sasanian nobles must have fled to Central Asia and even to China from Iran, and they surely contributed to the spread of the Persian language in such cities as Bukhārā and Samarkand in place of Sogdian. A Middle Persian–Chinese bilingual inscription on a gravestone has been found near the town of Sian in Shensi province of western China. It records the death of a princess of the Suren family from the year 872 or 874, evidence of the late persistence of Sasanian families in exile.[5]

[1] E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1946), pp. 171, 257. [On Persian appeals to China cf. p. 547.]

[2] *Ibid.* p. 172.   [3] *Ibid.*   [4] *Ibid.* p. 173.

[5] W. Sundermann und T. Thilo, "Zur mittelpersisch-chinesischen Grabinschrift aus Xi'an (Volksrepublik China)", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* XI (Berlin, 1966) 437–50.

Other members of the Sasanian royal family at different times sought to raise the flag of revolt against the Arab masters of Iran, but all failed. These revolts are part of Islamic history, but again they testify to a certain persistence of allegiance among the Persian nobility to the Sasanian dynasty, when its restoration was beyond hope. The traditions of Sasanian Iran were to continue into Islamic Iran, however, where many institutions and cultural legacies were to assert themselves in the new synthesis of an ecumenical culture of Islam under the 'Abbāsids. It is ironic that the Persian aristocracy was not prepared to rally to and to defend Yazdgard in his time of need but later maintained and fostered Sasanian culture and traditions even against the Arabs and Islam. In a sense, Sasanian Iran experienced a rebirth under the 'Abbāsids, for it was the Sasanians who provided the patterns and background for the splendour of the imperial court of Baghdad.

Appendix I. Chronological Table of the Sasanian dynasty

Persian Name	dates	Greek form	Middle Persian form	Arabic form
Ardashīr	224–40	᾿Αρταξάρης ᾿Αρταξέρξης	'rtḥštr	Ardashīr
Shāpūr	240–70	Σαπώρης, Σαβουρ	šḥpwḥly	Sābūr
Hurmazd I (Hurmazd-Ardashīr)	270–1	Ὡρμίσδης	'wḥrmzd	Hurmuz
Bahrām I	271–4	Γουαράθρανος,	wlḥl'n	
Bahrām II	274–93	Οὐαράνης,	wlḥl'n	Bahrām
Bahrām III	293	Βάραμος, etc	wlḥl'n	
Narseh	293–302	Ναρσαῖος, Νάρσης	nrsḥy	Narsī
Hurmazd II	302–9	Ὡρμίσδης	'wḥrmzd	Hurmuz
Shāpūr II	309–79	Σαπώρης	šḥpwḥr	Sābūr
Ardashīr II	379–83	᾿Αρταξάρης	'rtḥštr	Ardashīr
Shāpūr III	383–8	Σαπώρης	šḥpwḥr	Sābūr
Bahrām IV	388–99	Γουάραθραν	wlḥl'n	Bahrām
Yazdgird I	399–420	Ἰσδιγέρδης	yzdkrt	Yazdijird
Bahrām V	420–38	Οὐαραράνης	wlḥl'n	Bahrām Jūr
Yazdgird II	438–57	Ἰσδιγέρδης	yzdkrt	Yazdijird
Hurmazd III	457–9 (?)	Ὡρμίσδης	'wḥrmzd	Hurmuz
Pērōz	459–84	Πηρόζης	pyrwč	Fīrūz
Balāsh	484–8	Βλάσης, Βάλας	wlḥš, wrd'ḥšy	Balāsh
Kavād I (first reign)	488–96	Καβάδης, Κωάδης	kw't	Qubād
Zāmāsp	496–8	Ζαμάσφης	z'm'sp	Zāmāsf
Kavād I (second reign)	498–531	Καβάδης	kw't	Qubād
Khusrau I	531–79	Χοσρόης	ḥwslwb	Kisrā (*ksry*) Anūshirwān
Hurmazd IV	579–90	Ὡρμίσδης	'wḥrmzd	Hurmuz
Khusrau II (first reign)	590	Χοσρόης	ḥwslwb	Kisrā Abarwīz
Bahrām VI Chobīn	590–1	Βαράμης	wlḥl'n	B. Shūbin, Jūbīn
Khusrau II (second reign)	591–628	Χοσρόης	ḥwslwb	Kisrā Abarwīz
Kavad II (Shīrūya)	628	Καβάδης	kw't	Qubād
Ardashīr III	628–9	᾿Αρταξάρης	'rtḥštr	Ardashīr
Shahrvarāz	629	Σαρβαραζ, Σάρβαρος	ḥštrwr'č	Shahr barāz
Bōrāndukht	630–1	not attested	bwl'ndwḥt	Būrān Dukht
Yazdgird III	632–51	Ἰσδιγέρδης	yzdkrt	Yazdijird

APPENDIX 2

The following transcriptions are intended to assist the reader in identifying different forms of the words in various sources; from them one can deduce the MPers., Greek or Arabic forms of other words and names occurring in the chapter. No attempt has been made to transliterate Armenian names or well-known place names.

PLACE AND PERSONAL NAMES

Ādurbād son of Mahraspand or Mihraspand, MPers. *'twrp'ty mḥrspnd'n.*
Ādur Gushnasp, MPers. *'twr gwšnsp*, Aramaic *'drgwšnsp.*
Amazasp, MPers. *'mčspy*, Greek *'Αμαζασπ.*
Ardashīr, MPers. *'rtḥštr*, Greek *Αρταζαρ* (or *'Αρταξέρξης*); Arabic *ardashīr.*
Ardavān, Parthian: *'rtbnw*, Greek *'Αρτάβανος.*
Bahrām, MPers. *wlḥl'n*, Greek *Γουαράθρανος, Οὐαράνης, Βάραμος*, etc., Arabic *bahrām.*
Balāsh, MPers. *wlk'š*, Greek *Βλάσης, Βαλᾶς*, Arabic *balāsh.*
Khusrau, MPers. *ḥwslwd(y)*, Greek *Χοσρόης*, Arabic *kisrā.*
Gundēshāpūr, MPers. *wyḥ* (or *wḥ*) *'ntywk šḥpwḥl*, Greek *Γουε-αντιοχ-σαβωρ*, Arabic *jundaisābūr*, Syriac *byt l'pṭ.*
Hurmazd, MPers. *ḥwrmzd* (or *'wḥrmzd*), Greek *'Ωρμίσδης.*
Karkha, MPers. *'yr'n 's'n kr(t) kw't*, Aramaic *krk' d ldn.*
Kartīr, MPers. *kltyl* (Kerdīr), Greek *Καρτειρ* (and other spellings).
Kavād, MPers. *kw't(y)*, Greek *Καβάδης, Κωάδης*, Arabic *qubād.*
Narseh, MPers. *nrsḥy*, Greek *Νарσαῖος, Ναρσῆς.*
Pērōz, MPers. *pylwč, prywz*, Greek *Πηρως, Περόζης*, Arabic *fīrūz.*
Shahrbarāz, MPers. **ḥštrwr'č*, Greek *Σαρβαραζ*, Arabic *shahrbarāz.*
Shāpūr, MPers. *šḥpwḥr*, Greek *Σαπώρης* (or *Σαβουρ*), Arabic *sābūr.*
Susa (Ērān-farrah-Šāpuhr), MPers. *'yr'n GDH šḥpwḥry*, Aramaic *šūš*, Arabic *al-sūs.*
Vahrīz, MPers. *wḥryč*, Greek *Οὐαριζης*, Arabic *bahrīz.*
Vēh Antiok Khusrau, MPers. *wyḥ 'ntywk ḥwslwd*, Arabic *al-rūmiyya, rūmiyān*, NPers. *rūmagān.*
Vologases, Parthian *wlgšy*, Greek *'Ολαγάσης* or *Βολογέσης.*
Yazdgird, MPers. *ydzkrt*, Greek *'Ισδιγέρδης*, Arabic *yazdajird.*
Zāmāsp, MPers. *z'm'sp*, Greek *Ζαμάσφης*, Arabic *zāmāsf.*

SPECIAL TERMS

andarzbad, MPers. *ḥndrčpt*, "chief advisor".
dar-andarzbad, MPers. *BB' ḥndrčpt*, "court councillor".
dehkān, MPers. *dḥyk'n*, "yeoman" (now "farmer").
diram MPers. *ZWZN*, "coin of weight approx. four grams".

hazārbad, MPers. *ḥč'lpt*, "army leader of a thousand".
marzbān, MPers. *mlčp'n*, "margrave".
mihragān, MPers. *mtrwg'n*, "festival of the autumnal equinox".
mōbadān-mōbad, MPers. *mgwpt'n mgwpt*, "chief priest".
nōrūz, MPers. *nwklwč*, "New Year's Day".
spāhbad, MPers. *sp'ḥpt*, "army leader".

CHAPTER 5

THE HISTORY OF EASTERN IRAN

Even during the heyday of the Achaemenian empire an active part was played in its history by the peoples of eastern Iranian stock and language. As early as the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) the Sakas – Iranian nomads of Central Asia – had fought side by side with the élite troops of the Persian centre. On board the Persian fleet at Salamis in 480 B.C. the marines, a corps no doubt specially selected for their reliability, included Sakas as well as Medes and Persians. In addition the land army which Xerxes led to Greece in the same year contained many eastern Iranian contingents. The "Amyrgian" Sakas of Herodotus (who are called the Saka Haumavarga in the Old Persian inscriptions, and who, in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Darius I from the Suez Canal are defined as the "Sakas of the plains", as opposed to the "Sakas of the marshes")[1] were then brigaded with the Bactrians under the command of Hystaspes, a son of Darius. Also present were the people of Aria (Herāt), led by Sisamnes; Parthians and Chorasmians led by Artabazus; Sogdians under Azanes, and Sarangians (Drangians), from the country of the lower Helmand, under Pherendates. The Chorasmian, Dargman b. Ḥarshin, named in an Aramaic papyrus of 464 B.C. from Elephantine in Egypt, and engaged in litigation over land with one of the Jewish inhabitants,[2] could thus have been a pensioned survivor from Xerxes' Grand Army. In this way, the principal eastern Iranian nations, both nomadic and sedentary, make their first appearance in the pages of history. At this early date they were naturally somewhat overshadowed by their rulers, the Medes and Persians, whose closer acquaintance with the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia had given them a lead in the techniques of centralized government, and so enabled them to dominate their eastern neighbours. Ultimately, however, the sedentary eastern Iranians, such as the Chorasmians and Sogdians, were able to achieve virtual or complete independence. The nomadic Sakas in their turn were even able to set up an extensive empire, including a large part of northern India, during the 1st century B.C.

[1] G. Posener, *La Première Domination perse en Égypte* (Cairo, 1936), p. 185.
[2] A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1923), p. 15.

It was during the campaigns of Alexander the Great, after the Macedonians had overrun the western provinces of the Persian empire, that the eastern Iranian element became especially prominent in the Persian camp. For the Persians at the battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.) an important part was played by the Bactrian and Saka cavalry, whilst contingents from Parthia, Sogdia and Arachosia are also mentioned. The leader of the Sakas at this battle bore the name of Mauakes, which in its later form Maues was to become famous once again in the history of the Indo-Scythian empire (see below, p. 194). The majority of these eastern Iranian troops had been mustered by Bessus, who after the Persian defeat quickly emerged as the most powerful of the Persian leaders under Darius III. Thus after the assassination of the king, it was Bessus who assumed the royal prerogatives, and retired to his satrapy of Bactria to carry on the struggle against Alexander in eastern Iran.

Alexander's pursuit of Bessus thus brought about a Macedonian invasion of the eastern provinces, where a Macedonian influence was established more lasting than that which had been introduced into western Iran. From Artacoana, probably at the site of the modern city of Herāt, a wide southward sweep led the conqueror across Drangiana and Arachosia to the valley of the Kabul river, and the foot of the Hindu Kush. To secure his communications in these provinces, many fortified cities were founded by Alexander; Artacoana was replaced by Alexandria-amongst-the-Arians; in Drangiana, Alexandria-Prophthasia provided a garrison centre; Alexandria-amongst-the-Arachosians was sited, as the recently discovered inscriptions of Aśoka seem to imply, at the Old City of Qandahār; and Alexandria-of-the-Caucasus stood probably on the Salang river at Jabal Suraj, not far from Charikar. It was from this last foundation that Alexander led his army northwards across the range, the speed of his movements baffling all attempts at resistance. The unhappy Bessus retreated to the north bank of the Oxus, but when Alexander threw his troops across the broad river on improvised rafts of hide, the satrap's followers turned against their leader, placing him under arrest, and handing him over to Alexander for execution.

After the capture of Bessus, Alexander advanced to Maracanda (Samarkand), and thence to the river Jaxartes (Syr Daryā). Yet local resistance was by no means at an end. The immediate occasion of the rising which followed was Alexander's order to the local chiefs to

assemble for a conference at Bactra, an instruction which was thought to mask some sinister purpose. The communities along the Jaxartes rose and put to death their Macedonian garrisons. Altogether seven walled towns shut their gates on Alexander. These were rapidly reduced by his energetic siege operations, the most considerable of the cities being Cyropolis, a settlement of which the name survives in the present-day Kurkath. The Macedonians in revenge put to death all the male inhabitants of these towns, and enslaved the women and children.

Meanwhile Alexander's forces were being threatened on two other fronts. On the north bank of the Jaxartes a force of Saka horsemen had assembled, and were preparing to attack the Macedonians. At the same time news was received that the garrison which had been left behind at Maracanda was being besieged by the local chief Spitamenes. With covering fire from his siege-catapults, Alexander was able to send his forces across the Jaxartes and disperse the Sakas. But reinforcements sent to relieve the garrison at Maracanda were caught at a disadvantage during an incautious pursuit of the enemy, and were defeated with heavy losses. It was only when Alexander brought up his main army by forced marches from the Jaxartes that the situation was restored.

Soon afterwards, Alexander went into winter quarters at Bactra. But towards mid-winter he moved out with five columns and crossed the Oxus to suppress unrest in Sogdiana. Spitamenes consequently transferred his activities to the south bank of the river, and even attempted a raid against Bactra itself. However, he was ultimately defeated in a number of engagements with detachments of the Macedonian cavalry, and eventually returned to Sogdiana. There his Saka auxiliaries turned against him, cutting off his head and sending it to Alexander. Or, if the version of Quintus Curtius (VIII. iii. 13) can be believed, the murder of Spitamenes was the act of his estranged wife.

The turning point in Macedonian relations with the people of Sogdiana was Alexander's marriage to the Iranian heiress Roxana, daughter of the influential chief Oxyartes, a prominent leader of the local resistance to the conqueror. When a mountain stronghold of Oxyartes was captured by the Macedonians, Roxana fell into Alexander's hands. Subsequently he was able to win over Oxyartes, who in turn effected Alexander's reconciliation with Chorienes, another chief who was still resisting. Thus the bitter hostility which the people of Bactria and Sogdiana had initially displayed towards the Macedonians



Map 4. Historical map of Central Asia.

was replaced by a mutual understanding, and Alexander was able to enlist the Sogdian, Bactrian and Saka cavalry who served him well in India at the battle of the Hydaspes.

There is also evidence that Alexander settled in the garrison cities of eastern Iran large numbers of homeless Greek mercenary soldiers. Some of these were no doubt Greek mercenaries who had been in the service of Darius III, though the majority were detachments from Alexander's own forces. The settlements provided the nucleus for the substantial Greek colonization of Bactria and Sogdiana which was to become an important factor in the history of the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. Yet these involuntary settlers did not always perform with docility the role for which they had been chosen. In 326 B.C. when Alexander was recovering from wounds sustained during fighting against the Malli in India, a rumour of his death reached the settlers in Bactria and Sogdiana. Weary of their long exile in a distant land, about three thousand men banded themselves together to march back to Greece, but the sources are in conflict as to their fate. Diodorus (XVII. 99. 5) reports that they were massacred by Macedonian troops, but according to Quintus Curtius (IX. 7) they reached their homes. A more serious mutiny of the settlers took place after Alexander's death at Babylon in 323 B.C. According to Diodorus (XVIII. 7. 2) no less than twenty-three thousand men mutinied and set out on their homeward march. They were intercepted and massacred by Macedonian forces sent out from Babylon by Perdiccas under the command of Pithon. Tarn, however, believed that this figure for the number of mutineers was greatly exaggerated.[1]

After Alexander's death the satrapies of his empire were divided between his officers. Sibyrtius received Arachosia, and Oxyartes, the father of Roxana, was confirmed as satrap of the Paropamisadae along the Kabul river. To Stasanor was allotted Aria and Drangiana, whilst Philip retained the satrapy of Bactria and Sogdiana. During the War of the Successors all these governors supported Eumenes against Antigonus; but after his final victory near Iṣfahān Antigonus returned to the west, leaving them undisturbed in possession of their satrapies.

In 312 B.C. Seleucus returned to Babylon and founded the Seleucid empire. He at once embarked on the reconquest of the eastern provinces from their independent satraps. However, he was less successful when he attempted to invade the Maurya empire of India under its new

[1] Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 72.

ruler Chandragupta. Ultimately Seleucus was obliged to cede to the Mauryas his easternmost provinces, that is to say at least the Paropamisadae and Arachosia. Though Tarn argued to the contrary,[1] the recent discovery of inscriptions has made it clear that Maurya control of these two provinces was effective. In addition to the fragmentary Aramaic inscription of Aśoka from Laghmān now in the Kabul Museum,[2] recent years have brought to light two inscriptions of Aśoka in the Old City of Qandahār. One of these is a bilingual in Greek and Aramaic describing the benefits conferred on his subjects by Aśoka's conversion to Buddhism; the second, in Greek only, contains a portion of Aśoka's thirteenth pillar edict, and calls for harmony between the Buddhist sects. A third inscription in Aramaic, later reported from Qandahār, contains fragmentary Buddhist texts.[3] The presence of these inscriptions confirms that in the time of Aśoka (the grandson of Chandragupta) the Mauryas had effective control of the Paropamisadae and Arachosia. However, confirmation is lacking for Strabo's inherently less probable statement that a large part of Aria was also ceded by Seleucus to Chandragupta.[4]

Though obliged to cede his most easterly provinces to the Maurya, Seleucus none the less consolidated his grip on Bactria, Margiana and Sogdiana. An invasion of Saka nomads from the north was eventually beaten off, though it appears that they first succeeded in destroying the city of Marv. In 293 B.C. the king's son Antiochus, whose mother, Apame, was the daughter of the Bactrian Spitamenes, and who was thus himself half-Iranian, was posted to Bactra as joint king to direct the defence of the eastern frontier. In honour of the young prince Marv was refounded under the name of Antiochia-in-Margiana, whilst the Seleucid mint of Bactra issued coins with the joint names of Seleucus and Antiochus. However, when Antiochus succeeded to the sole rule in 280 B.C., his attention was diverted to the problems of Asia Minor, and the Seleucid hold on eastern Iran began to weaken.

It was before the death of Antiochus I in 261 B.C., as a newly discovered inscription of Gurgāan now shows,[5] that a certain Andragoras was appointed as Seleucid satrap of Parthia and Hyrcania. During the succeeding reign, that of Antiochus II (261–246 B.C.), Andragoras

[1] *Ibid.* p. 100.

[2] W. B. Henning, "The Aramaic inscription of Asoka found in Lampāka", *BSOAS* XIII (1949), pp. 80–88. A second Aramaic inscription of Aśoka from Laghmān was published by A. Dupont-Sommer, "Une nouvelle inscription araméene d'Asoka trouvé dans la vallée de Laghman (Afghanistan)", *CRAI* 1970, pp. 158–73.

[3] *JA* 1966, 437–70.

[4] Strabo XV. 724.

[5] Robert, "Inscription hellénistique d'Iran".

began to assert a claim to autonomy by the issue of coins in gold and silver. These were, however, inscribed only with the satrap's personal name, and without the royal title. However, within a few years Andragoras had been crushed by a new power, that of Arsaces, founder of the Parthian empire, who overran the province at the head of his nomadic followers, the Parni. Though Wolski has advocated a lower chronology, it seems best to regard the starting point of the Arsacid era in 247 B.C. as marking the overthrow of Andragoras, and the moment of Arsaces' succession as ruler of Parthia.

At about the same date, and further to the east in Bactria, another Seleucid satrap was working his way to independent sovereignty. This was the celebrated Diodotus, the founder of the Bactrian kingdom. His rise is marked by the appearance, on coins still carrying the name of Antiochus II, of a new portrait. It is accompanied by the new ruler's punning device, the figure of Zeus hurling the thunderbolt. On later issues the name of Diodotus appears with the royal title. According to a statement of Justin (XLI. 4. 9) Diodotus (whom he calls Theodotus) was succeeded by a son of the same name. However, numismatic authorities disagree as to whether the portraits of two Diodoti can reliably be distinguished on the coins.

The defection from the Seleucid empire of the satrapies of Bactria and Parthia must have become permanent as a result of difficulties from which the empire suffered after the death of Antiochus II in 246 B.C. According to the remarkable inscription seen at Adulis on the Red Sea by the Christian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes[1] in the 5th century A.D., the king of Egypt, Ptolemy III Euergetes, invaded Seleucid territory, crossed the river Euphrates and subjected to himself Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Susiana, Persis, Media and the rest of the empire, as far as the borders of Bactriana. Thus Parthia and Bactria were for a time left in isolation, and their links with the Seleucid government were never re-established.

It was not until the reign of Antiochus III the Great in 208 B.C. that an attempt was made to reconquer Parthia and Bactria for the Seleucid empire. Antiochus marched eastwards from Ecbatana, and invaded the province of Hyrcania, which was then part of the Parthian empire. There he captured a palace at Tambrax and stormed the entrenched city of Syrinx, before passing eastwards to cross the river Arius (Harī Rūd) and to invade Bactria. The Bactrians were at this time under the rule of Euthydemus, a Greek of Magnesia, who directed a stout

[1] *The Christian Topography*, ed. E. O. Winstedt (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 73–4; also cf. Justin XXVII. i. 9.

resistance. After the Bactrian cavalry had failed to defend the crossing of the Arius, Euthydemus retreated to stand a siege at his capital of Bactra, where he was protected by high mud-brick ramparts and extensive marshes. Antiochus besieged the city for two years, but in vain. Then, intimidated by his opponent's threat to admit the dangerous Saka nomads of the northern steppe, Antiochus granted terms. Euthydemus – who claimed he was no rebel, but the slayer of the children of rebels (i.e. of Diodotus) – was allowed to retain his kingdom. However, he surrendered his elephants to Antiochus, and concluded a treaty of alliance with him. At the same time the kingly bearing of Euthydemus' son Demetrius so impressed the Seleucid that he offered the young prince a daughter in marriage – a contract that seems not to have been fulfilled. Antiochus then marched on to the district of the Paropamisadae, in the upper valley of the Kabul river. There he made terms with the Indian prince Sophagasenus, and returned at last to his capital by the long road through Carmania and Persis. Meanwhile Euthydemus was left alone at Bactra as the ruler of the Greeks of eastern Iran.

Only scattered fragments survive of the works of the ancient historians who told the story of the Bactrian kingdom – in particular Apollodorus of Artemita, and Trogus. These have been pieced together with the evidence of the varied and beautiful coinage rediscovered over the last hundred and fifty years, with the progress of archaeological exploration in the Punjab and in Afghanistan. The famous work of Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, provides a stimulating reconstruction of the history of the Bactrian Greeks. Yet sceptical readers have been inclined to suspect an element of exaggeration in the ancient sources, when they speak, for example (Strabo xv. 686), of the "thousand cities" of Bactria,[1] or the Indian conquests of Demetrius, Apollodotus and Menander. Apart from their coins archaeological reconnaissance in northern Afghanistan had until recent years revealed so little trace of the Bactrian Greek settlements that Foucher wrote with some justification of "le mirage bactrien".[2] It was only in 1964 that the site of a great fortified city was discovered by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan in Badakhshān, at the junction of the rivers Kokcha and Oxus.[3] The modern name of the site is Ai Khānum, and

[1] Cf. pp. 9, 243–4.

[2] A. Foucher, *La Vieille Route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila* I (Paris, 1942), 73.

[3] Schlumberger and Bernard, "Aï Khanoum". For the very extensive subsequent results of excavations, see now Bernard, *Fouilles*.

the peninsula between the two rivers is cut off to the south-east by a system of powerful ramparts. Two citadels were discovered, with an upper and lower city, and in the latter pottery of the Hellenistic period was found lying on the surface. This pottery included stamped amphora handles bearing the Greek inscription of an *agoranomos*. Thus no doubt remains that for the first time a definite settlement of the Bactrian Greeks has been located. It may indeed be true that the principal cities of the Bactrian kingdom were situated along the banks of the Oxus river. It supports this view that the famous treasure of Graeco-Bactrian coins at the Kabul Museum, known as the Qunduz Hoard, was found at the mound of Khisht Tepe, situated on the banks of the Oxus to the north-west of Qunduz.[1]

After the death of the emperor Aśoka towards 236 B.C. the Maurya empire in India began to disintegrate; we have seen that during the campaign of Antiochus III its northernmost provinces were under the rule of Sophagasenus. The latter also soon disappeared, and in about 190 B.C. the power vacuum in northern India invited an invasion on the part of the Bactrian Greeks. The evidence of their coins suggests that of the Indo-Greek kings descended from Euthydemus, Demetrius I, Apollodotus I and Antimachus I Theus were all prominent in these expeditions, though their relative chronology has not been finally established. It is clear that the Greeks quickly crossed to the south of the Hindu Kush range, and established themselves at Kapisa in the upper Kabul valley, the modern Begram; at Pushkalāvatī (Charsada) near Peshawar; at Gardīz; and at Taxila in the Punjab. However, a new danger was soon to threaten these Euthydemid princes from the rear. For the formidable Eucratides, perhaps, as Tarn suggested, an emissary of the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes sent to effect the reconquest of Bactria, had risen against Demetrius I north of the Hindu Kush. When the latter returned from India to oppose him, it was only to meet defeat and death.

The subsequent kings who attempted to uphold the Euthydemid cause in Bactria, Euthydemus II, Agathocles and Pantaleon, were evidently short lived. Soon the house of Eucratides, which besides its founder included Eucratides II Soter, Plato and Heliocles, had established undisputed control of this territory. Their success was, however, less overwhelming when they advanced to conquer the Indian territories of the Euthydemids, for there it seems that a new personality,

[1] Curiel and Fussman, *Le Trésor monétaire de Qunduz*, pp. 9, 83–7.

the celebrated Menander, had arisen to oppose them. It is not easy to define the connection of Menander with the house of Euthydemus. Tarn suggested that he might have been a general of Demetrius I who married a sister of Agathocles, but the evidence is tenuous. Yet whatever his origins Menander established himself firmly at Pushkalāvatī, perhaps after a brief incursion there by Eucratides, and soon established a powerful kingdom. Since the coins of Menander are by far the commonest of all the Indo-Greek issues coming to light at Charsada, his reign must have been long. Moreover, his fame amongst the Buddhists of India was so great that he was made the interlocutor in the Buddhist text *Milindapañha* ("The Questions of Menander"), a religio-philosophical dialogue in almost the Platonic manner.[1]

Almost the only evidence for the later history of the Indo-Bactrian kings is the arrangement of their coins, a task with which the evolution of the coin legends and the sequence of the monograms afford some help. None the less, substantial uncertainties remain, and though the list of rulers and their approximate sequence can be determined, the evidence is hardly sufficient to provide the basis for a continuous narrative.

There are grounds for the belief that the Indian era of *c.* 155 B.C. (found, for example, in the Taxila copper-plate of Patika,[2] and called by Tarn the "Old Saka" era) was in fact an Indo-Bactrian era established by Menander, and commencing from the year of his accession. If this deduction is correct, the date provides a fixed point in the history of the later Indo-Bactrian rulers. To the following decade, that running from 145 to 135 B.C., must be attributed the career of Antialcidas, the Indo-Bactrian king who is mentioned in the Brahmi inscription of the Besnagar pillar (cf. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, pl. VI). Though the inscription connects the king's ambassador with the city of Taxila, the monograms of the coins of Antialcidas suggests that he was also in control of Gardīz and Pushkalāvatī. His authority may in fact have extended over all the principal Indo-Bactrian centres.

In the last generation of Indo-Bactrian rulers, *c.* 135–125 B.C., the dominant figure is that of Strato I. His reign appears to have commenced at Pushkalāvatī, but to have been interrupted by the incursions

[1] *Milindapañha*, tr. I. B. Horner, London, 1963; *The Questions of King Milinda*, tr. T. W. Rhys Davids, Oxford, 1890 (Sacred Books of the East, xxv). On the coins of Menander, see now Bivar, "The sequence of Menander's drachmae", *JRAS* 1970, p. 131, where his reign is estimated on numismatic evidence at nearly 10 years.

[2] See below, Appendix IV, no. 3.

of several rivals, in particular by that of Heliocles. It could be presumed that the Heliocles known from the Indo-Bactrian coin series is the same personage as figures in the list of the kings of Bactria, though Whitehead believed that the Indo-Bactrian portrait was of a second ruler of the same name.[1] In any event Strato I later reappears in the coin series of Pushkalāvatī, and to this second phase of his coinage belong the unusual issues which show the young king's bust jugate with that of a queen who is named as Agathocleia. She was believed by Rapson[2] and Tarn to be the mother of Strato, though it is hard to be sure that she may not actually have been his wife. This issue is immediately followed by another with jugate portraits, that in the joint names of Hermaios and Calliope. Subsequently, however, there are further issues of Strato from the same mint; but the fourth phase of his coinage, that bearing the titles ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΩΝΟΣ, is found only in the series attributable to Taxila and Gardīz.[3] It therefore appears that Strato transferred his centre of operations to these places from Pushkalāvatī. At the two former mints, Taxila and Gardīz, the successor of Strato was evidently Archebios; and it was long ago suggested by Tarn, with much plausibility, that Archebios was in this area the immediate predecessor of the first Indo-Scythian ruler, Maues. The table given as Appendix I thus shows the probable succession of Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian rulers in the Indo-Iranian area from the second century B.C.

THE NOMAD INVASIONS

The complex and disturbed succession of the later Indo-Bactrian rulers was to a large extent the consequence of a far-reaching event which took place in approximately 130 B.C. This was the nomad invasion of the Bactrian kingdom. The movement of peoples which swept away the Greek rulers on the Bactrian plain had its origins in disturbances far away on the Central Asian frontiers of China. The story has often been told of how the Hsiung-nu[4] (a tribe from which subsequently originated the Huns of European history) rose to become a great

[1] R. B. Whitehead, "Notes on the Indo-Greeks, Part III", *NC* 1950, p. 211.

[2] J. Rapson, "Coins of the Graeco-Indian Sovereigns Agathocleia, Strato I Soter, and Strato II Philipator", *Corolla Numismatica: Numismatic Essays in Honour of Barclay V. Head* (Oxford, 1906), p. 245.

[3] Bivar, "Indo-Bactrian Problems", p. 107.

[4] W. M. McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, pp. 117, 126ff; R. Grousset, *L'Empire des steppes*, Paris, 1939; E. Chavannes, "Les Pays d'Occident d'après le Heou Han Chou", *T'oung Pao* VIII (1907), 149. [On this section cf. pp. 539ff.]

power and a threat to the rulers of north China. Their kingdom reached its zenith under the great Maotun (*c.* 209–174 B.C.) who defeated the neighbouring tribes and established himself as the overlord of the steppes. To the south-west of the Hsiung-nu in Kansu province, there pastured another tribal confederacy of rather mixed composition known as the Yüeh-chih. These too were defeated by Maotun, whilst further to the north he impinged upon their neighbours the Wu-sun, and drove them also towards the west. After the death of Maotun his son, Giyu, also known as Lao-shang, again attacked the Yüeh-chih, routing them, and killing their king in battle. The survivors of the Yüeh-chih, being pastoral nomads like the Hsiung-nu, were finally driven to trek away towards the west, passing, it seems, down the valley of the Ili river and along the southern shore of Lake Issyk Kul. From this region they expelled a group of Saka tribes, designated in the Chinese chronicle (the *Ch'ien Han Shu*)[1] by the term Sai-wang (meaning "Saka king"), and drove them away to the south-westwards. On their march, however, the Yüeh-chih had collided with the Wu-sun, who now returned to attack them in the rear, and drive them headlong into Farghāna on the heels of the Sakas. Thus soon after 160 B.C. two powerful hordes, the Sakas and the Yüeh-chih, were poised on the Graeco-Bactrian frontier of the river Jaxartes.

At this point western sources take up the story of the nomad conquest of Bactria. Scholars generally agree that the Yüeh-chih of the Chinese sources are in fact identical with the tribe named as the Tochari in the western texts. Subsequent happenings are described in a well-known passage of the *Geography* of Strabo (XI. 511): "The nomads who became the most famous were those who took away Bactriana from the Greeks – the Asii or Asiani, the Tochari, and the Sacaraucae, who set out from the far bank of the Jaxartes adjoining the Sacae and Sogdiani, which the Sacae had occupied."

The doings of the Asiani are also mentioned in two of the *Prologues* of Pompeius Trogus. Prologue XLI contains the statement "The Scythian tribes of the Saraucae [*read*: Sacaraucae] and the Asiani seized Bactra and Sogdiana." This passage corresponds closely with the account given by Strabo, whilst Prologue XLII, referring to later events, includes the sentence "The Asiani became kings of the Tochari, and

[1] Cf. A. Wylie, "Notes on the Western Regions", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* XI (1882), 84; K. Jettmar, *Die frühen steppen Völker*, Baden-Baden, 1964. "Saka" represents the Iranian and Greek forms of the name, written in Latin as "Saca", and in strict transliteration of the Indian sources as "Śaka".

the Saraucae [*read*: Sacaraucae] were destroyed." It will be seen that although the names may not be etymologically identical, the historical rôle played by the Asiani is precisely that of the people who later came to be known as the Kushāns, founders of the Kushān empire. It is, moreover, evident that these displaced nomad groups quickly overran the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom lying to the north of the Hindu Kush range. Tarn's deduction seems to be correct that the invasion took place at a date between 141 B.C. and 129 B.C., when a wave of nomad invaders is reported by Justin (XLII, 1–2) to have burst into Parthia.

Direct evidence is lacking for the subsequent movements of the nomad tribes. It is likely, however, that the Sakas travelled to the south by way of Herāt, passing through Drangiana and the region of the Helmand bend, which subsequently became known as Sakastān, from which derives the region's modern name of Sīstān. Later, following in the tracks of Alexander, they would have passed north-eastwards through Arachosia, before turning east towards the Indian plain through the various passes in the Sulaimān range and the North-west Frontier. Meanwhile the Tochari bequeathed their name to Tukhāristān, the region of Qunduz and Baghlān in modern Afghanistan, which commands the northern approaches to the passes of the Hindu Kush. They too will ultimately have made their way to Gandhara by the more direct, but arduous, route of the mountain passes. However, the march of the Tochari lasted nearly a hundred years longer than that of the Sacaraucae, who were thus left in almost undisputed control of the Punjab throughout the 1st century B.C.

The theory that the Sacaraucae turned westward after their sack of Bactra is confirmed by the sensational finds of gold treasure excavated in the summer of 1979 by the Soviet archaeologist V. I. Sarianidi at Tilla Tepe, near Shibarghan in Afghanistan. These rich burials around the remains of a prehistoric temple were shown by numismatic and other evidence to be much later, 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D., and were characterized by their massive offerings of gold. The brief reports so far available[1] suggest that the objects belonged to two distinct styles. The first, represented by at least one golden libation-bowl (*phialē*) of strictly Classical form, is presumably to be interpreted as a relic of the Hellenistic civilization of Bactria. Yet the bulk of the finds reflect a specific "Animal style", already known from a bracelet of the Oxus Treasure,[2] and a pair of gold armlets in Peshawar and at Cologne.[3]

[1] *Time* Magazine, 2 July 1979; Sarianidi, *Archaeology* XXXIII. 3 (1980), 31–41.

[2] Dalton, p. 39, nos. 144–5.

[3] Jettmar, p. 178.

These southerly finds are manifestly related to the goldwork of the Siberian collection of Peter the Great, now at Leningrad. Yet similar contorted forms, and polychrome inlays in turquoise and garnet, are typical of the gold pieces from Shibarghan. There, however, one remarkable piece, a gold clasp based on a rendering of the Greek god Dionysus in his leopard-chariot, though similarly decorated, was obviously inspired by a Hellenistic prototype. In all probability the Shibarghan burials reflect a westward movement of the Sacaraucae from the pillage of Bactra, loaded not only with any surviving Hellenistic treasure, but also with surplus gold that had been melted down, and reworked according to their taste. Evidence not only for the route of the Sacaraucae, and for the fantastic opulence of the spoils of Bactra, the excavations also cast light on the origins and inspiration of the various schools of Scythian art. A sensitive analysis is likely to show that just as many objects from Siberia illustrate Achaemenian themes remodelled to the taste of the tribal craftsman, so the finds of Shibarghan illustrate a comparable metamorphosis of Hellenistic subjects. For the immediate narrative, however, the impression which results from these new finds is of the astonishing affluence of the Saka chiefs, who, after the capture of Bactra, led their peoples to the conquest of Southern Asia.

Yet if the Sakas travelled, as seems most likely, by the Arachosian route, it is surprising that the first Saka ruler to issue coins was Maues in the heart of the Indo-Bactrian kingdom at Taxila. This circumstance led Narain[1] to resort to a theory that Maues and his Sakas had reached Taxila by travelling southwards from Kāshghar over the "Hanging Pass" into Indus Kōhistān. It is indeed scarcely credible that a cavalry force should have travelled by such precipitous routes; but the problem remains, and its solution could well be that Maues was a commander of Saka mercenaries in the service of the Greek kings, who gained control of the kingdom from within at a moment when an external Saka onslaught was pending. It is notable that according to Jenkins' analysis[2] the subsequent Saka rulers, such as Vonones, Spalirises and Azes I, issued coins first in Arachosia, as might have been expected in the case of invaders coming from the west. Yet an even more important point which emerges from Jenkins' study is that the immediate successors of Maues at Taxila were not Sakas but Greeks. It was only after the intervening reigns of Apollodotus II and Hippostratus that Saka rule was once more restored by Azes I.

[1] *The Indo-Greeks*, pp. 135ff.

[2] Jenkins, "Indo-Scythic Mints", p. 2.

The earliest date for Maues, if the reading can be trusted, is provided by the Maira well inscription of 98 B.C., the latest by the copper-plate of Patika from Taxila, which is dated to 78 B.C. It appears that Maues died far to the south-east of his capital, at Mathurā. For the Lion Capital from that site seems to have been his monument, with its long inscription containing the names of many Saka chiefs, and referring to "solemnities over the illustrious king Muki and his horse" (*Muki -[śri]raya saśpa [a]bhusavit[a]*). It is said to have been erected "in honour of the whole of Sakastan" (*sarvasa Sak(r)astanasa puyae*). A. H. Dani has indeed recently shown that the writing of certain portions of the inscription displays the letter forms characteristic of the Kushān period, and nearly two centuries later than the date of the personages who are named.[1] Yet this circumstance need not cause us to doubt the authenticity of their information. It is likely enough that the Buddhist monks whose establishment was founded to keep alive the memory of the king possessed a copy of their foundation deed on perishable material. When it began to show signs of wear, they would naturally have transcribed it upon the monument itself. The reference to the role of the horse in connection with the Saka funeral rites is a vivid and appropriate detail. Comparison may be sought with the numerous cases of horse-sacrifice in Scythian burials in south Russia; or again, with the funeral of Rustam in the *Shāh-nāma*.[2]

It may be surmised that the last expedition of Maues to Mathurā, and the concentration there of the principal Saka chiefs (whose names are listed in the inscription) took place during a campaign to reduce the last Indo-Greek garrisons in the area. Rajula, who is prominently mentioned, subsequently became satrap of Mathurā, and issued coins which form the direct sequel to issues of the Greek kings Strato II and Apollophanes in that area. Meanwhile the death of Maues seems to have robbed the Sakas of a unified leadership. The prince (*yuvaraja*) Kharahostes was supposed by Konow to have been the heir to the imperial title.[3] If he is rightly identified with the personage of the same name who issued coins, he was not, indeed, the son of Maues but of a certain Arta, otherwise unknown, whom Konow conjectures to have been the brother of the Saka emperor. Since the coins, in bronze only, carry the title merely of "Satrap", it seems that Kharahostes never

[1] A. H. Dani, "The Mathura Lion Capital Inscription (A Palaeographical Study)", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* v (1960), pp. 128–47.

[2] Firdausī, *Shāh-nāma* vi (Beroukhim edition, Tehrān, 1935), p. 1743, l. 4334.

[3] *CII* ii, Part i, *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions*, p. 36.

effectively succeeded to the empire. The type of his coins is "*king mounted with lance*", which suggests that he later held office as a contemporary, no doubt a subordinate, of Azes I.

A notable coin discovery now shows that the immediate successor of Maues at Taxila was a woman, perhaps his queen, whose name appears in Greek as ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΡΟΠΟΥ ΜΑΧΗΝΗΣ, a spelling which may represent the Iranian name Māhīn.[1] A new name has thus been added to the list of queens who played a part in history. Naturally the lack of a male heir at this critical time will have placed the Saka confederation in jeopardy. This was the moment when, as the coin analysis shows, the Indo-Greek king Apollodotus II regained control of Taxila, and presumably expelled the Sakas from the city. Apollodotus II was followed in turn by another Greek king, Hippostratus, the volume of whose coins suggests a reign of some duration. It was at this point that Azes I, ruler, as we have seen, in Arachosia, appears on the Punjab scene as champion of the Saka cause. There followed a ding-dong struggle between the Greeks and Sakas for control of Taxila. Azes I was once more expelled by Hippostratus, but finally reasserted himself to establish the definitive supremacy of the Sakas.

A fixed date is provided for the final restoration of Azes I in the Punjab by the fact that he was apparently responsible for the inauguration of the so-called Vikrama era, which commenced in 57 B.C., and which is still in use in India today. In two early inscriptions, the Kalawan copper-plate of the year 134, and the Taxila silver scroll of the year 136,[2] datings in the Vikrama era are designated by the term *ajasa* (or *ayasa*), which is best interpreted "of Azes". It may be assumed that the era commenced with the date of Azes' accession, and that it more probably relates to his restoration than to his earlier, interrupted, reign. There is consequently justification for reckoning Azes' restoration as having occurred in 57 B.C. This hypothesis, that the Indian Vikrama era of 57 B.C. originates with the accession to the paramount power of Azes I, is now explicitly confirmed by a newly-discovered Kharoṣṭhī inscription.[3]

The successors of Azes I were Azilises and Azes II. There are no

[1] G. Le Rider, "Monnaies de Taxila et d'Arachosie: une nouvelle Reine de Taxila", *Revue des Etudes Grecques* LXXX (Paris, 1967), p. 341.

[2] See Appendix IV, nos. 14 and 15.

[3] H. W. Bailey, "Two Kharoṣṭhī casket inscriptions from Avaca", *JRAS* 1978, pp. 3–13.

known events or fixed dates for these reigns, but it is clear that the reign of Azes II extended into the beginning of the 1st century A.D. Meanwhile, a Parthian feudal family, soon to be known as the dynasty of the Indo-Parthians, was pursuing the migrating Sakas up the valley of the Helmand, and down into the Punjab. Stage by stage the Indo-Scythian empire of the Sakas was conquered by the advancing Indo-Parthians, upon the coins of whom appear such names as Gondophares, Orthagnes, Abdagases, Pacores and Sasan, besides a certain Arsaces Theos whose connections are uncertain. Various problems arise concerning the exact sequence of the Indo-Parthian rulers, but the date of Gondophares is firmly established by the Takht-i Bahī inscription of the year 103,[1] which is also dated to the twenty-sixth year of Gondophares' reign. The first date must be reckoned according to the "era of Azes" (57 B.C.) and therefore corresponds to A.D. 46, whilst the accession year of Gondophares was consequently A.D. 20. These are dates which appear the more convincing because they agree with the only other information preserved about the emperor Gondophares, which is his connection with the tale of the voyage of the Christian apostle Thomas to India. The tradition records that Thomas set out for India immediately after the Crucifixion, i.e. in April A.D. 30.[2] The appearance of Gondophares in the Acts of the Apostle Thomas is therefore chronologically acceptable, and serves to confirm the dating proposed for the inscription.

Meanwhile the Tochari and their associates the Asiani were pressing south from Tukhāristān through the passes of the Hindu Kush into the Kabul valley, and by the beginning of the 1st century A.D. were breaking out onto the Punjab plain. This was the time when the Asiani, i.e. the Kushāns, established themselves as the "rulers of the Tochari". These events are summed up in a well-known passage of the Chinese *Hou-Han shu*, which has been quoted by Konow:

Formerly the Yüe-chï were conquered by the Hiung-nu; they transferred themselves to the Ta-hia [i.e. Bactria] and divided that kingdom between five *hi-hou* [minor chiefs], viz., those of Hiu-mi, Shuang-mi, Kuei-shang, Hi-tun and Tu-mi.

More than a hundred years after this the *hi-hou* of the Kuei-shang, called K'iu-tsiu-k'io, attacked the other four *hi-hou*; he styled himself king; the name of his kingdom was Kuei-shang. He invaded An-si and seized the

[1] See Appendix IV, no. 12.

[2] Wright, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, p. 146. A. T. Olmstead, "The chronology of Jesus' life", *Anglican Theological Review* XXIV. 1 (Evanston, Ill., 1942), p. 23.

territory of Kao-fu; moreover he triumphed over Pu-ta and Ki-pin and entirely possessed those kingdoms. K'iu-tsiu-k'io died more than eighty years old. His son Yen-kao-chen became king in his stead.[1]

This passage is interpreted as describing the establishment of the Kushān empire under Kujula Kadphises, and the eventual succession to the throne of his son Vima Kadphises. The Takht-i Bahī inscription is often thought to contain a mention of the Kushān prince Kujula Kadphises, whose rule over the Yüeh-chih horde will thus have begun early in the Christian era, and necessarily before A.D. 46.

THE KUSHĀN EMPIRE

The Kushān empire founded by Kujula Kadphises was soon to expand on both sides of the Hindu Kush, and to become for more than a century the most influential civilizing force in Asia. To the south the Kushāns thrust forward to dominate the north Indian plain, establishing their centres at Peshawar and at Mathurā (Muttra), and even penetrating for a time into the basin of the Ganges. To the north, still conscious of their nomad origins, the Kushāns sought to restore contact with the Chinese borderlands in which their wanderings had begun. No doubt their great resources in animal transport as a nomadic people gave them the means to set the Chinese trade flowing, and to form a bridge between the civilizations of India and China. At the same time the fact that in Bactria they were the successors of a Hellenistic civilization gave them special points of contact with the Mediterranean world. The staple item in the westbound trade was of course silk, which could now avoid Parthian territory and be diverted southwards to the Indus delta, to finish its journey to the Roman empire by sea. In return, besides gold coin, Rome sent manufactured goods of many kinds – woollen tapestries, engraved gems and cameos, figurines and metalware; but perhaps most important of all, the magnificent glassware of Alexandria, since China in the 1st century A.D. had not developed the manufacture of glass. At the same time the Indian territories of the Kushāns exported both towards China and to Italy their exquisite ivories. For all this trade the French excavations at Begram in Afghanistan have proved the most revealing source of information, but minor finds are known from many sites.

The complexity of the migration in which the Kushāns took part and

[1] *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions*, pp. lvi, lxii. [For further detail see chapter 6, III. For alternative spelling of some of the names see p. 246.]

the variety of the tribes which accompanied them naturally raise many difficult problems of race and language. So far as the ruling group were concerned, their drooping moustaches and bulbous features, as frequently depicted in the sculpture of Gandhara, or on the coins, have caused many commentators to doubt, perhaps with insufficient reason, that they could have been Indo-Europeans. Kennedy argued eloquently that they represented a Turkish, or at any rate non-Iranian physical type.[1] The medieval Arab writer al-Bīrunī regarded them as Tibetans;[2] whilst their contemporary, the Syrian Bardesanes in his *Book of the Laws of the Countries*,[3] reports the existence of matriarchal tendencies in their society. At the same time their dress and equipment – the buckled cloak, long shirt, and the baggy trousers of the horseman, depicted in many works of Gandhara sculpture, and especially on the statue of the emperor Kanishka from Mathurā (pl. 79) – were no different from that of the other Iranians of the steppe. Like the Sakas they wore scale-armour, and their weapons included a straight sword over three feet long.

It is not known whether the Kushāns possessed a special language, distinct from that of their associated tribes. However, it is now clear that the official language of the Kushān empire, an Iranian dialect written in Greek script, is in fact Bactrian – that is, the local eastern Iranian dialect of the province in which the Kushāns had settled after crossing the Oxus. This language is now known from the inscriptions of a large part of the Kushān coinage, and especially from the twenty-five-line lapidary "Inscription of Nokonzoko" discovered by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan at Surkh Kotal, and interpreted by the late Professor W. B. Henning.[4] It seems likely that this adaptation of the Greek script for the writing of the Bactrian language had already been carried out by the Greeks in Bactria before the coming of the Kushāns, since the devices employed for the rendering of the specifically Iranian sounds are entirely of the type that would occur to the Greek mind; e.g., the rendering of the aspirate by upsilon (since in Greek initial upsilon invariably carries the rough breathing), and of the *š* sibilant by *san*. It is also curious that the "Inscription of Nokonzoko" contains one word in common with the Khotanese texts of Central Asia. This is the Bactrian *xšono*, Khotanese *kṣuna* – "regnal year" – but it remains to be determined in what dialect this word originated.

[1] J. Kennedy, "The Secret of Kanishka", *JRAS* 1912, p. 670.
[2] *India*, II, tr. E. Sachau (London, 1910), pp. 10–13.
[3] Ed. and tr. H. J. W. Drijvers (Assen, 1964), p. 47.
[4] Henning, "The Bactrian Inscription", p. 47. [See also chapter 36. Ed.]

The next group in the tribal hierarchy after the Kushāns were the Tocharians, but of their language no trace survives in Bactria. Some scholars are inclined to attribute to the Tocharians the two Indo-European *centum* dialects found in manuscript fragments from Kucha and Qarashahr. However, though there is a possibility that one or both of these dialects may have been connected with that of the migrating Tocharians, it seems clearer until positive proof comes to hand to designate them Agnaean and Kuchaean, rather than to forejudge the question by terming them "Tocharian A and B". A rather similar problem arises in connection with the dialect of the Sakas in India. Words and names attributable to them are found on the Indian coins and inscriptions, and have been variously connected. Thus the name of the Saka satrap Caṣṭana has been compared with the modern Pashto word *tsaxtan* "master", suggesting a connection between Pashto and the Indo-Scythian dialect. On the other hand such Indo-Scythian words as *horamurta* "supervisor of donations" and *bakanapati* "priest" have been compared with Khotanese.[1] Yet since Pashto and Khotanese are not closely related, the linguistic situation in the Kushān empire must have been more complex than at first appears.

Over the chronology of the Kushān empire much controversy prevails, but a definitive solution may now be within reach. The relative chronology of the rulers can be deduced from their coins, and is fairly well agreed. Starting in the first decades of the Christian era, there ruled Kujula Kadphises, then a "nameless king", designated on coins merely by his title, Soter Megas "The Great Saviour", and Vima Kadphises. The next series of coins provides the names of three further rulers, Kanishka (Kaniṣka) I, Huvishka (Huviṣka) and Vāsudeva. However, the absolute chronology of these reigns, and our knowledge of several minor members of the dynasty who did not strike coins, has to be deduced by assembling the evidence of a large number of dated inscriptions, some in Kharoṣṭhī and others in Brahmi script, from various sites in the subcontinent. To these must now be added the two dated Bactrian inscriptions from Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. Complications arise in the study of the inscriptions from the fact that several different eras are used for dating. To devise a chronological scheme, the eras have first to be identified. In fact, the best hypothesis

[1] For *horamurta*, *horamrṇdaga*, *horakaparivara*, in the Indo-Scythian inscriptions, see Konow, *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions*, pp. cxviii, 148, H. W. Bailey, "Languages of the Saka", p. 136, and Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, p. 96.

assumes the existence of four quite different eras, all probably originating from the accession years of dynastic founders, on the following lines:

(a) An Indo-Bactrian era of *c.* 155 B.C. (often called the Old Saka era).

(b) The era of Azes commencing in 57 B.C.

(c) The Śaka era, used originally by the western satraps of Ujjain, commencing in A.D. 78.

(d) The era of Kanishka, *c.* A.D. 128.

The epigraphical evidence on which this scheme is based is given in Appendix IV.

It is necessary to take note at this point of the newly discovered Kushān trilingual inscriptions near the plain of Dasht-i Nāvur to the south-west of Kabul. Once described by Paul Bernard as the "Rosetta Stone" of Kushān archaeology, they prove to have been sadly defaced, and to raise now quite as many problems as they solve. Besides the versions in Greek-letter Bactrian, and in Kharoṣṭhī, the third text is in an unknown script showing affinities with Kharoṣṭhī, but of which the language is quite unknown; amongst other possibilities, it could of course be that of the Kushān dynasty themselves (see above, p. 199). Though the content of the inscriptions is problematical, the date at least seems to be perfectly clear, being the month Gorpiaios of the year 279.[1] The present writer had argued elsewhere[2] the case for attributing this date to Tarn's "Old Saka" era (better perhaps Indo-Bactrian era) of 155 B.C., which provides the solution 279 – 155 = A.D. 124. The ruler named at Dasht-i Navor is apparently Vima Kadphises, and this once more is in agreement with the present writer's prediction that the accession of Kanishka (I) should be placed either in A.D. 128 or A.D. 125. Unfortunately the editor of the inscription felt unable to accept so simple a conclusion, being determined to uphold the chronology which places the accession of Kanishka in A.D. 78. If Tarn's "Old Saka" era of 155 B.C. is accepted for the calculation of the new date, the inscription of Dasht-i Navor itself proves (as was evident from material previously known) that so early a date for Kanishka would be impossible. Professor Fussman sought an escape from this dilemma by attempting to refer the new inscription, together with all the inscriptions previously known which are ascribed to the "Old Saka" era, instead to the Arsacid era of 247 B.C. It is by no means

[1] Fussman, "Documents épigraphiques Kouchans", esp. pp. 38–40.

[2] "The Kaniṣka Dating from Surkh Kotal", p. 501.

the first time this solution has been proposed for the inscriptions of Gandhara, and earlier refutations of the resulting chronology are of course still valid. First, on this calculation the solution of the Dasht-i Navor date would be 279 − 247 = A.D. 32. This solution places Vima Kadphises earlier indeed than the latest firm date for Gondophares, that of the Takht-i Bāhī inscription, 103 − 57 = A.D. 46. The date of Gondophares is the sheet-anchor for any reliable theory of early Indian chronology. Any serious student of the numismatic sequence would find it hard to believe that the fine gold coinage of Vima coexisted with the billon of Gondophares, or that the two rulers were contemporaries and neighbours.

There is, however, an even stronger objection to the "Arsacid" theory. Professor Fussman scouts as baseless Tarn's argumentation[1] that an important era began in 155 B.C. or thereabouts. Yet that argument was necessary to account for the date 78 in the celebrated copper-plate of Patika.[2] This document mentions the Saka emperor Moga, who is certainly identical with the ruler Maues known from coins, and with a deceased ruler named as Muki, again found in association with Patika on the Mathurā lion-capital.[3] It is evident from the numismatic sequence[4] that Maues must have lived one or two decades earlier than Azes I, the founder of the "Vikrama" era of 57 B.C. The coins also show that Maues must have come to power later than the Indo-Greek kings such as Archebius, who were ruling *c.* 110–100 B.C. These requirements are satisfactorily met by Tarn's solution. The Patika copper-plate is then dated 155 − 78 + 1 = 78 B.C.; and the Maira inscription of year 58, which possibly also mentions Maues, would fall in 155 − 58 + 1 = 98 B.C.[5] These are perfectly plausible dates in the reign of Maues, and provide their own justification for Tarn's point of departure.

On the other hand, if one seeks to apply the Arsacid era to the Patika copper-plate, the resulting figures bear no relation to probability. Thus 247 − 78 + 1 = 170 B.C., which would make of Maues a contemporary of Eucratides, and run counter to all the logic of the numismatic sequence. Professor Fussman does not explain in his article, how, on his hypothesis, he would account for the copper-plate of Patika. The only escape from the dilemma would be to assume the existence of some further era, specifically to accommodate the copper-

[1] Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 501.
[2] *CII* II, pt. i, pp. 23–9.
[3] *CII* II, pt. i, p. 48.
[4] Jenkins, "Indo-Scythic Mints", p. 15.
[5] *CII* II, pt. i, p. 12.

plate. After this the question arises of how the remaining inscriptions are to be distributed between this hypothetical era, and that of the Arsacids. It is evident, therefore, that the "Arsacid theory" leads to various anomalies, and finally to a labyrinth of special pleading. The present writer must be forgiven if he prefers to regard the evidence of Dasht-i Navor as providing long-awaited confirmation of his earlier reasoning, and of the traditional chronological framework maintained by Sir John Marshall and others before him, who placed the accession date of Kanishka in the range A.D. 125–8.

The list of inscriptions makes clear the evidence for the dating of the principal Kushān kings, and shows that in addition to the rulers known from coins, there were two more ephemeral Kushān kings, Vāsishka and a possible Kanishka II, whose reigns are known only from the inscriptions. The demise of the last major Kushān emperor, Vāsudeva, appears to have taken place around A.D. 225. This is an impressive coincidence of dates, when it is borne in mind that the overthrow of the Kushān empire has often been attributed to the Sasanian dynasty of Iran, whose founder, Ardashīr I, defeated and slew the last Parthian king, Ardavān V, and was acknowledged as emperor of Iran in A.D. 224. According to the Arab historian Ṭabarī,[1] Ardashīr shortly afterwards undertook a campaign against the empire of the Kushāns, and won a notable victory, as a result of which the Kushān king sent messengers to offer submission. During the subsequent reign, that of the Sasanian Shāpūr I (A.D. 240–72), the son of Ardashīr I, it is evident from the inscription on the monument called the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam, near Persepolis, that the Sasanians directly ruled all the territories of the Kushān empire as far east as, if not including, the city of Peshawar.[2] This was the former capital of Kanishka I, and it is therefore clear that the advent of the Sasanians put an end to the days of Kushān grandeur. However, it is not improbable that one or two lesser Kushān kings, whose existence is vaguely hinted at by the evidence, may have continued to rule over those fragments of the Kushān empire which lay to the east of the river Indus. In particular, it appears that there are coins which can be attributed to a third Kanishka, who was apparently a successor of Vāsudeva. Thus it is not improbable that some of the inscriptions which give the name of Kanishka, and bear dates between 1 and 22, may in

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 17. *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* 1, ed. M. J. de Goeje *et al.* (15 vols., Leiden, 1879–1901), 819.
[2] Maricq, "Res gestae", 306, 350.

fact be due to this third Kanishka, and dated by his regnal years. However, only a close study of the palaeography and sculptural style of monuments bearing the name of Kanishka is likely to reveal which, if any, of these is attributable to this later Kanishka III.

Kanishka I is in any event by far the best known and most celebrated member of the Kushān dynasty. Despite the absence of any narrative history of his reign, which is known principally from coins and inscriptions, certain facts emerge from the legends which surround his name. It is unlikely that as Buddhist sources allege Kanishka was himself a convert to Buddhism, for his foundation of a dynastic fire temple at Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan suggests that the state religion of the Kushāns was a form of Mazdaism.[1] Yet the appearance of the figure of Buddha on one of Kanishka's coins confirms that this emperor was at any rate sympathetic to the Buddhists, as the Buddhist tradition maintains. There is evidently truth in the story that the emperor founded the famous Kanishka monastery and *stūpa* at Peshawar, for the remains of the *stūpa* have been excavated and the relic casket found in its bears a Kharoṣṭhī inscription recording it as the gift of Kanishka.[2] Also linked with the memory of Kanishka was the Third Buddhist Council, convened in Kashmir, or according to another version at Jalandhara, to prepare commentaries on the canonical Buddhist texts.

The literary and intellectual activity of Kanishka's reign is prominent in the Buddhist traditions of China and Tibet, and must not pass unnoticed. Most of its outstanding personalities are associated with the Third Buddhist Council,[3] or with its leading participants. Outstanding was its convener Parśva, and its president Vasumitra, who together supervised the compilation of the important commentary on the canonical texts, the *Mahāvibhāṣa*. The preparation of such commentaries, rather than mere selection of the canon, is quoted as a major aim of the Council. At the same time, a passage of its text weighs against this synchronism of the *Mahāvibhāṣa* with Kanishka, by referring to the past a miracle of that reign.[4]

More celebrated for his creative achievement than those religious organizers (with whom he is closely linked) was the poet and dramatist

[1] [See pp. 847ff. for a discussion of the religious beliefs of the Kushāns.]

[2] See Appendix IV, no. 24.

[3] E. Frauwallner, "Die buddhistischen Konzile", *ZDMG* CII (1952), 250–6; T. Watters, *On Yuan-Chwang's Travels in India* (London, 1904–5), pp. 270–8; E. Zürcher, "The Yüeh-Chih and Kaniṣka in the Chinese Sources", in Basham (ed.), *Papers*, pp. 379–82. For the Buddhist background in general, see especially Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*.

[4] Zürcher, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

Aśvaghoṣa,[1] best known as the author of the life of the Buddha called the *Buddhacarita*. Also regarded as authentic is his classical drama *Śariputraprakaraṇa*, known from Central Asian fragments,[2] and the poetical work *Saundaranandakāvya*,[3] wherein is described the conversion of the Buddha's half-brother Nanda, and of which the colophon contains apparently reliable biographical details of the author. Other works attributed to Aśvaghoṣa are, however, of disputed authorship. The *Sūtrālaṃkāra*, which contains references to the Kushān emperor, and was believed by Lévi to be the work of the Buddhist patriarch,[4] is nowadays considered by some to be more properly entitled the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*, and to have in fact been compiled by the somewhat later author Kumaralāta.[5] A number of other Buddhist writings, such as the *Gurupañcāśika* ("Fifty verses on the rules for serving one's teacher"),[6] the *Gaṇḍīstotra* (on the music produced from a type of xylophone),[7] the *Vajrasūcī* ("the Diamond Needle", a criticism of the caste system), the *Mahāyana-śraddhotpādaśāstra* (on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyana doctrine),[8] and others known chiefly from their Chinese versions, are usually attributed to later namesakes, and thought to allude to doctrinal differences of the late medieval period, although traditionally ascribed to the Kanishkan patriarch. Different authorities acknowledge the existence of three, or even six, authors named Aśvaghoṣa in various periods, and at least two rulers known from coins and inscriptions seem to have borne this name. For the historical personage with whom we are concerned, the most reliable tradition is that he was born at Saketa, son of Suvarṇakṣī.

Even though it can be contended that the Buddhist teacher was not identical with the poet and dramatist,[9] it seems over-sceptical to doubt

[1] E. H. Johnstone, *The Buddhacarita*, Part II (Oxford, 1936), pp. xiii–xcviii (Punbaj University Oriental Publications, 2); B. C. Law, *Aśvaghoṣa*, Calcutta, 1946 (RASB Monograph series, 1); *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, *s.v.* Aśvaghoṣa; F. Weller, *Zwei zentralasiatische Fragmente des "Buddhacarita"*, Berlin, 1953; Dobbins, *Stupa*, p. 38.

[2] Heinrich Lüders, "Das S., ein Drama des Aśvaghoṣas", *SPAW* 1911, pp. 388–411.

[3] E. H. Johnstone, *The "Saundarananda" of Aśvaghoṣa*, Oxford (Punjab University Oriental Publications no. 1), 1928.

[4] Sylvain Lévi, "Aśvaghoṣa, le Sutralamkara et ses sources", *JA* 1908, pp. 57–184, esp. pp. 62, 79.

[5] H. Lüders, *Bruchstücke der "Kalpanāmanditikā" des Kumaralāta*, Leipzig, 1926. Contra, Lévi, "Encore Aśvaghoṣa", *JA* 1928, p. 196.

[6] S. Lévi, "Autour d'Aśvaghoṣa", *JA* 1929, pp. 256–63.

[7] F. W. Thomas, "A new poem of Aśvaghoṣa", *JRAS* 1914, pp. 752–3.

[8] Tr. M. Teitaro Suzuki, Chicago, 1900. Cf. P. Demiéville, "Sur l'authenticité du 'Ta tch'eng k'i sin louen'", *Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise* II. 2 (Tokyo, 1929), p. 65.

[9] So A. K. Warder, "The Possible Dates of Parśva, Vasumitra (II), Caraka and Mātṛceṭa", in Basham, *Papers*, p. 238.

his conversion to Buddhism by Parśva, or by the disciple of the latter, Puṇyayaśas (Pūrṇāśa).[1] An important Khotanese text represents Aśvaghoṣa as the spiritual adviser of Kanishka in Buddhist matters, and as having played a part in the popularization of the Buddha image.[2] Since it may now be taken as demonstrated[3] that the appearance of the Gandhara school of Buddhist sculpture (and approximately simultaneous developments at Mathurā) in the main belong to the opening years of Kanishka's reign, the relation of Aśvaghoṣa and his circle to this movement needs to be analysed. It could be conceived that the stereotyped iconography found at northern Buddhist sites many miles apart could have been inspired by illustrated copies of such texts as the *Buddhacarita*. The recent discussion by Dagens,[4] concerned only with limited material from Hadda, in fact concedes that certain sculptures correspond to the narrative of the *Buddhacarita*, though the *Lalita-vistara* appears to have been the more influential source.

Although the Tibetan *History of Buddhism* by Tāranātha appears to identify with Aśvaghoṣa the scholar Mātṛceṭa, the evidence now seems stronger that the latter author belonged to a later generation. The fact that he is known for his epistle to a ruler named Kanishka, the *Mahārājakanikalekhā*,[5] wherein he excuses his inability to travel to court on account of his advanced age, had been thought to link him with the generation of Aśvaghoṣa. Against this, however, must be reckoned the well-supported tradition that Mātṛceṭa was converted to Buddhism from the cult of Śiva at Nālandā by Āryadeva, the disciple of Nāgārjuna (the personality next to be discussed).[6] Nāgārjuna was himself a younger contemporary of Kanishka's generation, so that this chain of evidence suggests a significant lapse of time. At the same time, there is separate epigraphic and numismatic evidence for the existence of two rulers bearing the name of Kanishka, and some commentators have even concluded that there were altogether three Kushān rulers of that name. The Kanishka mentioned in the Ārā inscription dated in the year 41 is traditionally referred to the era of

[1] Lévi, "Encore Avaghoṣa", p. 199.

[2] H. W. Bailey, "Kanaiska", *JRAS* 1942, pp. 20–1. A similar tradition is reported by S. Lévi, "Notes sur les Indo-Scythes", *JA* 1896, p. 475.

[3] A traditional view, for which the arguments of Bivar, "Hāritī and the Chronology of the Kuṣāṇas", p. 18 are now emphatically substantiated by the newly discovered sculpture in Fussman, "Documents épigraphiques kouchans", pp. 54–5.

[4] B. Dagens, *Monuments préislamiques d'Afghanistan*, p. 15n29; p. 17n43.

[5] F. W. Thomas, "Mātriceṭa and the Mahārājakanikalekha", *IndAnt* XXXIII (1903), 356–60.

[6] D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *The "Śatapañcāśatka" of Mātṛceṭa*, (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 7–9.

the first Kanishka, though account must now be taken of MacDowall's interesting suggestion that this date should be referred to an era of A.D. 78 coinciding with the Śaka era of western India.[1] If his hypothesis is well founded, the Ārā inscription will no longer be evidence for the existence of a second Kanishka. Thus the Kanishka known from later Kushān ("Murunḍa") coins will be Kanishka II, reigning *c.* A.D. 225. On the traditional interpretations, the last-named ruler would be Kanishka III. In either event, it would be reasonable to place the *floruit* of Nāgārjuna *c.* A.D. 155 and of Āryadeva *c.* A.D. 185, and thus connect the epistle of Mātṛceṭa with this last Kanishka in the advanced years of the sage *c.* A.D. 225.

The list of the thirteen known literary works of Mātṛceṭa is given by Shackleton Bailey.[2] Apart from his famous epistle, he was best known for his Buddhist hymns, in particular the *Śatapañcāśatka* ("The Hymn of 150 Verses"), and the *Varṇārhavarṇastotra*,[3] both of which have been edited. The consensus of recent opinion is thus fairly clear that Mātṛceṭa was a personage quite distinct from Aśvaghoṣa, and significantly later in date,[4] and moreover that his celebrated epistle is no evidence for placing him in the circle of Kanishka I *c.* A.D. 128–51. Traditionally reckoned, however, the court physician of that emperor was Caraka, known especially for his redaction of the herbal pharmacopoeia of Agniveśa current under the title of *Caraka Saṁhitā*, published in India in several editions. Also most important for his historical synchronism in this literary circle was Saṅgharakṣa, likewise reckoned one of the first Kanishka's spiritual guides in Buddhism, who was also the author of a *Buddhacarita* apparently distinct from that of Aśvaghoṣa, and especially of the *Yogācārabhūmi*.[5] The chronological importance of the latter work is that it is known to have been translated into Chinese before A.D. 148,[6] so that while it supports earlier dates for the accession of Kanishka I, such as A.D. 128 or A.D. 78, it necessarily excludes some of the later dates which have been propounded.

[1] MacDowall, "Implications for Kushan Chronology", p. 259.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

[3] Shackleton Bailey, "The Varṇārhavarṇa Stotra of Mātṛceṭa (I)", *BSOAS* XIII (1950), pp. 671–701; "(II)", *ibid.*, pp. 948–1003. B. Pauly, "Fragments Sanskrits de Haute Asie (Mission Pelliot): XVIII. Matériaux pour une édition définitive du *Varṇārhavarṇastotra* de Mātṛceṭa", *JA* 1964, pp. 197–271.

[4] Shackleton Bailey, "*Śatapañcāśatka*", p. 15.

[5] P. Demiéville, "La Yogācārabhūmi de Saṅgharakṣa", *BEFEO* XLIV (1954), 339–436; P. C. Baghchi, "Saṅgharakṣa, the chaplain of Kaniṣka", in *Commemoration Essays Presented to Professor K. B. Pathak* (Poona, 1934), pp. 94–9.

[6] Zürcher in Basham, *Papers*, p. 356.

Already noticed as a younger contemporary of the personages discussed above was Nāgārjuna, traditionally the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[1] It is likely to be the case that the distinction between the two main branches of Buddhist belief may have been less sharp in the 2nd century A.D. than it later became, and that the life of Nāgārjuna may in later sources have been subject to some reinterpretation in the light of later controversies. In any event his chief work seems to have been the transmission of developed Buddhist doctrines to the Śātavāhana kingdom of the Deccan. It is plausibly argued that he could have been the contemporary of the ruler Vasiṣṭīputra Śrī Pulumāvi (*c.* A.D. 130–58); and that he took part in works of restoration of the monuments at Amarāvatī (the ancient Dhānyakaṭaka) which bear the inscriptions of that prince.[2] Certainly the Buddha image which appears in the late phase of the sculptures of Amarāvatī is often strongly reminiscent of Gandhara work, and could owe something to contacts with the Kushān centres. Yet in discussing such panels in the British Museum, Barrett was hesitant in attributing their inspiration to Nāgārjuna.[3] The sage is remembered for his epistle to an unnamed Sātavāhana ruler (presumably Pulumāvi) the *Suhṛllekha*, preserved in Chinese versions and in Tibetan.[4] Its title, "Epistle to a Friend", may be evidence of his personal relationship with the ruler. In addition he left philosophical works: the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* ("The Treatise of the Great Virtue of Wisdom"), recently translated from the Chinese;[5] the *Mahāyānaviṁśikā*,[6] and the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*.[7] There seems no reason to abandon the tradition which represents him as ending his days at the great archaeological site of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa which inherited his name.[8]

Another episode of the reign of Kanishka was the emperor's campaign

[1] For the life of Nāgārjuna in general, see Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 374ff; on the rise of the Mahāyāna, E. Lamotte, "Sur la formation du Mahāyāna", in J. Schubert and U. Schneider (eds), *Asiatica: Festschrift F. Weller* (Leipzig, 1954), pp. 377–96 and esp. 387–8.

[2] Warder in Basham, *Papers*, pp. 333–4.

[3] D. Barrett, *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum* (London, 1954), p. 59 and pl. XXIX.

[4] Sylvain Lévi, "Kaniṣka et Śātavạhana", *JA* 1936, 107–11; the Tibetan text was translated by H. Wenzel, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1886), pp. 1–32.

[5] Nāgārjuna, *Le Traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, tr. by E. Lamotte, 3 vols., Louvain, 1944. Vol. III, viii–xliv, contains a useful biographical note on Nāgārjuna.

[6] Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts* (Rome, 1956), 195–200. (Serie Orientale Roma, 9.)

[7] Ed. E. H. Johnstone and A. Kunst, Bruges, 1951.

[8] A. H. Longhurst, *The Buddhist Antiquities of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, Delhi 1938 (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, 54).

in eastern Turkestan, mentioned by the Chinese traveller Hsüan-Tsang in his account of the "monastery of the hostages" founded by Kanishka at Kapisa.

Surely to be connected with this Kushān penetration into the Tarim basin are the famous frescoes in pure Gandhara style discovered by Sir Aurel Stein at Miran. The close resemblance between the frieze of *putti* in the frescoes and that appearing on the Kanishka casket from Peshawar supports the deduction that both works belong to the lifetime of Kanishka. The Miran site will therefore be evidence of Kushān activity in the Tarim basin. It may be concluded that the far-reaching political sovereignty of Kanishka helped to secure a right-of-way for Buddhist travellers along the route to China. Not only did they introduce their characteristic Gandhara art at Miran, they also brought with them their Kharoṣṭhī script, which occurs in the Tarim basin in the documents from Niya, near Khotan, and in others from Endere and Lou-Lan. It was also used for writing works of Buddhist scripture, of which an example survives in the *Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, edited by Professor J. Brough.

LATE ANTIQUITY IN EASTERN IRAN

After the fall of the Kushān dynasty in A.D. 225, the provinces of Gandhara, Bactria and Sogdiana passed under the rule of Sasanian governors who bore the title of Kūshānshāh "King of the Kushāns". This Persian administration continued until about A.D. 360. The Kūshānshāhs are known chiefly from their coinage, which resembles that of the Sasanian empire of Iran in distinguishing the individual rulers each by his characteristic crown. Unlike the Sasanian coinage in Iran, however, the coinage of the Kūshānshāhs comprised little silver (only two isolated silver issues, of Pērōz I Kūshānshāh, and Hormizd I Kūshānshāh, are known) and was practically limited to issues in gold and bronze. The sequence of the Kūshānshāhs whose coins are known is given in the following list [cf. pp. 334, 339]:

Ardashīr I Kūshānshāh
Ardashīr II Kūshānshāh
Pērōz I Kūshānshāh
Hormizd I Kūshānshāh (*c.* A.D. 277–86; rebel against Bahrām II of Iran)
Pērōz II Kūshānshāh

Hormizd II Kūshānshāh (? subsequently Hormizd II of Iran, A.D. 302–9)
Varahrān I Kūshānshāh
Varahrān II Kūshānshāh (reigning A.D. 360).

References to the Kūshānshāhs in the historical sources are rare, but the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Carus 8) mention that during the advance of the Roman emperor Carus against the Persian capital of Ctesiphon in A.D. 283, the Persians were "occupied with domestic sedition", and therefore offered no opposition to the advancing Romans. Moreover, a Roman panegyric of the reign of Maximian (A.D. 285–305) describes how the Persian king, presumably Bahrām II (A.D. 276–93) was attacked by his brother "Ormies", a name which could well designate the Kūshānshāh Hormizd I. The issue by Hormizd I Kūshānshāh at Marv of Sasanian-type gold coins with the title Kūshānshāhānshāh "Kushān king of kings" was thus in all probability an act of open rebellion.

It is none the less clear that Bahrām II of Iran was successful in defeating the rebellion of the Kūshānshāh. This is evidenced not only by his continued reign until A.D. 293, a full ten years after the earliest mention of the insurrection; but also by a passing notice of the historian Agathias[1] who states that Bahrām reduced the people of Segistan (Sīstān) to subjection, and therefore conferred on his infant son the title of Sakānshāh. Though the rebellion of the Kūshānshāh is not specifically mentioned in this connection, it is natural to suppose that the reduction of the people of Segistan was accompanied by the overthrow of their neighbour the Kūshānshāh, with whom, according to the panegyric already quoted, they were in fact acting in concert.

The last possible reference in a western historian to the affairs of the Kushān governorate occurs in the description by Ammianus Marcellinus (XIX. i. 1–2) of the siege by the Sasanian emperor Shāpūr II of the Roman city of Amida. According to Ammianus, the Persian king led his army on horseback, "wearing in the place of a diadem a golden replica of a ram's head set with gems". It has already been observed that each of the Sasanian kings was distinguished, on coins and in art, by a characteristic crown, which he no doubt also wore in real life. The headdress of Shāpūr II was a mural crown, and not one of the type described by Ammianus. It is true, however, that the characteristic headdress of Varahrān II Kūshānshāh, quite probably a contemporary of Shāpūr II, was in the form of a ram's head. It seems likely, therefore,

[1] *Historici Graeci Minores*, p. 261.

that the Persian prince seen by Ammianus was not in fact Shāpūr, but the Kūshānshāh Varahrān II, who is thus shown to have been active in A.D. 360.

It is now time to turn to a new factor which began about A.D. 350 to impinge upon the history of the eastern Iranian lands. This was the coming of the Huns or Hsiung-nu (whose earlier history has already been noticed)[1] to the west from the borders of China. In A.D. 311 the southern section of the Hsiung-nu had captured and burnt the capital of the Chinese Tsin dynasty at Lo-yang, the terminus of the Silk Route famous to the Romans as Sera Metropolis. The disturbances which took place further to the west along the Silk Route as a consequence of this event are reflected in the Sogdian "Ancient Letters", found by Sir Aurel Stein in the Chinese Wall to the west of Tun-huang, and now in the British Museum.[2] In China the Hsiung-nu set up a dynasty which survived until A.D. 350. Meanwhile the northern section of the same people had been driven westwards from the vicinity of Lake Baikal by their rivals the Sien-pi. The Hsiung-nu apparently passed to the north of the Tien-shan range, where their movements were unknown to the historians of either half of the civilized world. It was only in A.D. 350 that their impact fell on the course of western history.

In that year Shāpūr II of Iran was besieging the Roman fortress of Nisibis in Mesopotamia when news reached him that the eastern frontiers of Iran were being attacked by nomadic invaders. He immediately abandoned the siege, and set out for the threatened spot. The historian Zonaras (II. 15) calls the invaders "Massagetae", and Ammianus Marcellinus (XIV. iii. 1) does not name them at this point in his narrative; but subsequently (XVI. ix. 4) it emerges that they were, in fact, the Chionites, a name formed from the Middle Persian word *xiyōn* "Hun", perhaps with the addition of a Greek tribal suffix. It is clear, therefore, that the invaders were a section of the Huns, who had lately arrived in Transoxiana in the course of their journey from the east. The struggle with these opponents kept the Sasanian king occupied until A.D. 358, when he was able to contract a treaty of peace with them, under which they were to join him as allies in a further campaign against Rome.

So it was that at the siege of Amida in A.D. 360 the Chionites under their king Grumbates were ranged amongst the allies of the Persians. A vivid detail which occurs in the narrative of Ammianus is that of

[1] See p. 191 above.

[2] Henning, "The date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters".

the cremation of Grumbates' son, who was killed in the fighting with the Romans. Since the Zoroastrian Persians of Shāpūr's army would have regarded cremation as anathema, it seems clear that this ritual was characteristic of the Chionites. Confirmation of Ammianus' statement comes in archaeological reports of cremation deposits found amongst the European Huns,[1] who will naturally have had affinities with the Chionites. At the same time there is evidence that some of the later Hunnish tribes in eastern Iran practised instead the rite of inhumation (see below).

Whereas the earlier Sasanian Kūshānshāhs had minted at Balkh (written *Baxlo* on the coins), as well as at an unnamed mint that was probably in the Kabul valley, it appears that Varahrān II Kūshānshāh, the contemporary of the Chionites, issued few coins at Balkh. The conclusion is that the Chionites, pressing down from the north, had already overrun Bactria. Shortly after A.D. 360, when the reign of Varahrān II Kūshānshāh came to an end, the next ruler to issue coins of Kushāno-Sasanian fabric was the enigmatic figure of Kidara. This personage was no doubt a Hun, to judge by the phrase "Kidarite Huns" used by the historian Priscus in a later context. Probably Kidara was a successor of Grumbates as ruler over the Chionites, who because of his leadership would have come to be known by his name. According to the Chinese sources followed by McGovern, a new wave of Hunnish invaders known as the Hephthalites fell upon Bactria towards the end of the 4th century, and drove the Kidarites into Gandhara. However, according to the thesis of Ghirshman, Chionites, Kidarites and Hephthalites were merely different names used at various periods for the same tribal group. The Chionites may indeed have been substantially identical with the later Kidarites, but there is support for the view that the Hephthalites were distinct in the passage of Procopius (*Wars*, I. 3) which describes the customs of the Hephthalites. Procopius claims that though Huns by name and race, the Hephthalites did not live as nomads; that they were of fair complexion and regular features; and that they practised inhumation of their dead, up to twenty of his boon companions being buried with each of their chiefs. In respect of their funeral rites, therefore, the customs of the Hephthalites contrast with those of the Chionites, and suggest that these two groups were wholly distinct.

[1] Cf. Nándor Fettich, "Le Trouvaille de tombe princière hunnique à Szeged-Nagyszéksós", *Archaeologia Hungarica* XXXII (Budapest, 1953), p. 105.

As to the language of the eastern Huns, just as in the case of the European Huns, no specimen survives, and scholars have disagreed in their theories as to the linguistic and racial background of this people. Ghirshman and Enoki,[1] on the basis of certain coin legends in cursive Greek script, maintained the hypothesis that the language of the Hephthalites was an Iranian dialect. However, this view seems to have been overtaken by the discovery of the inscriptions of Surkh Kotal (see above, p. 199), which show that the Iranian language in question was in fact the local dialect of Bactria, and not the language of the Huns themselves. The view of Minorsky, that the language of the Hephthalites was a Turkish dialect, therefore holds the field at present.[2] The case in its favour is much strengthened by the suggestion of Bosworth,[3] that the personage called in Islamic texts "Subkarī" (a prominent Khaljī Mamlūk of the Ṣaffārid Ya'qūb), in fact bore the Turkish name of Sebük-eri "beloved man", formed similarly to that of the later Ghaznavid prince Sebüktigīn "beloved prince". The name "Subkarī" also appears on coins of Fārs, where he gained control during fighting following the decline of the Ṣaffārids, on dirhams of the Hijrī years 296–8.[4] The only specimen so far reproduced is, however, one of the 'Umān mint in a Baghdad collection,[5] where the editor is possibly mistaken in reading the poorly preserved date as A.H. 308 (rather than 298), since it is known from the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* passage that this dangerous freelance was imprisoned by the caliph al-Muqtadir in Jumādā II 299/23 March–21 April 912, and is unlikely to have been restored to liberty.

Whether any linguistic difference existed between the Chionites, Kidarites and Hephthalites is quite uncertain, but Bailey has shown that their Persian and Indian neighbours distinguished between different groups as the Red Huns and White Huns respectively.[6]

[1] Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, p. 66; Enoki, "On the nationality of the Ephthalites", p. 56.

[2] Minorsky, "The Turkish Dialect of the Khalaj"; Frye and Sayili, "Turks in the Middle East before the Saljuqs", pp. 204–5, 207.

[3] Bosworth, "The armies of the Ṣaffārids", p. 545, quoting *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 252. Cf. also Bosworth, "The Turks in the Islamic Lands", p. 9.

[4] E. von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams* (Wiesbaden, 1968), p. 182 n 3.

[5] Muḥammad Abul-Faraj al-'Ush, "Rare Islamic coins: Additions", in D. K. Kouymjian (ed.), *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), p. 200.

[6] "Hārahūna", pp. 12–16. [Bailey has, however, shewn that some of the words quoted by the Chinese from the language of the Hiung-nu (called *ḫyon* in Middle Persian) are of Iranian origin; see "The Hiung-nu word for sky", in *S. K. Chatterji Memorial Volume* (Calcutta, 1979), pp. 25ff. Ed.]

During the 5th century A.D. the Hephthalites became an important power in the territories of eastern Iran. It was to them that the Sasanian prince Pērōz applied for assistance to recover the throne of Iran from his brother Hormizd III in A.D. 457. With the help of his Hephthalite auxiliaries he was successful, but later he went to war with his erstwhile allies, and was captured and defeated by their king, called Akhshunwār by Ṭabarī, or Khushnavāz by Firdausī. On this occasion Pērōz obtained his release by leaving his son Kavād as a hostage; but later, after ransoming Kavād he returned to the attack, and charged his cavalry into a hidden ditch, to perish with all his men.

During the 5th and early 6th centuries A.D. Indian sources record a series of incursions into the Punjab and western India by a people known as the Hūṇas. These were evidently a branch of the eastern Huns, though the nature of their connection with the Hephthalites of Bactria is not entirely clear. Their coin legends often give the rulers of these Indian Huns the title "king of Zābul", Zābul being apparently the name of a tribal grouping which was preserved in the toponymy of the Muslim period by the name of the district of Zābulistān, near Ghazna. In A.D. 458 the Gupta emperor of India, Skandagupta, had to resist an invasion of India by the Huns. However, after his death the Gupta empire disintegrated, and in A.D. 510 the Hūṇa chief Toramana established his rule over much of western India. His son and successor was the notorious Mihirakula, who ruled most of the Punjab in about A.D. 525, and when later repulsed from the Indian plains, continued to maintain himself in Kashmir. Mihirakula was succeeded by other Hūṇa kings, among whom were Khingila Narendraditya and Lakhana Udayaditya, besides a certain Purvaditya whose personal name is unknown. These reigns fell in the second half of the 6th century A.D., but though a recently discovered inscription now at Kabul[1] confirms that Khingila reigned for at least eight years, their exact dates are not recorded. The capitals of these later Zābulite kings are likely to have been in the territory of modern Afghanistan, perhaps either at Kabul, Ghazna or Gardīz.

Meanwhile the Sasanian emperor Khusrau I Anūshīrvān (A.D. 531–79) had resolved to end the menace to Iran of the Hephthalites and their incursions. He built lines of fortification on the Gurgān plain; one was the wall known today as Sadd-i Iskandar "Alexander's barrier", on the steppe north of Bandar-i Shāh and Gunbad-i Qābūs; the second

[1] Sircar, "Three Early Medieval Inscriptions", pp. 45–7.

runs from the mountains to the sea near Bandar-i Gaz, and covers the eastward approach to Māzandarān. At the same time a branch of the Turkish nation had arrived on the Jaxartes steppes from their original home in Mongolia. Khusrau made an alliance with the Turkish Khān – called in the western sources Sinjibu or Silzibul – to crush the Hephthalites. Soon after A.D. 557 a fierce battle was fought between the confederates and the Hephthalites, the latter being totally defeated and dispersed. The lands of the Hephthalites were partitioned along the line of the Oxus, those to the north passing to the Turks, while those to the south of the river were retained by the Sasanians.

The political situation in the east of what is today Afghanistan at this time is rather more obscure. Coins are known of a prince, perhaps a Hephthalite, whose name is written in Pahlavī script as *npky MLK'*. Some specimens appear to bear the mint-name Andarāb, and others, without name of mint, may have been issued at Kabul. The occurrence of such coins in a hoard which includes many of the Sasanian Khusrau I Anūshīrvān suggests that *npky MLK'* may have been the contemporary of this king.[1] If so, a few semi-independent chiefs of Hephthalite origin may have continued to rule in the Kabul area, perhaps with the title of Kābul-shāh, during the closing years of the Sasanian dynasty. In the region of Bādghīs, to the north-east of Herat, groups of Hephthalite survivors retained their ethnic identity until the Arab invasions of the 7th century A.D., when they are described as offering a stubborn resistance under the leadership of a certain Tarkhān Nēzak. It was recently suggested by Harmatta[2] that the correct reading of the Pahlavī coin legend mentioned above should indeed be *nyčky MLK'*, "the regular Middle Persian orthography of the name Nēzak", and thus identical with that of the opponent celebrated in the Arab annals. The reading is certainly feasible, and must be considered seriously; though whether the numerous coins are indeed as late in date as the actual opponent of the Arabs, or whether, as the author tends to imply, and the scanty numismatic evidence seems to suggest, the name would have been a hereditary title held by a succession of princes of whom the historical Tarkhān Nēzak was perhaps the last, is a problem still deserving investigation.

[1] Bivar, "A Sasanian Hoard from Hilla", *NC* 1963, pp. 159 and 172 (no. 1).

[2] J. Harmatta, "Late Bactrian Inscriptions", *AAntASH* XVII, 3–4 (1969) 408, 431. This reading has now been accepted by Richard N. Frye, "Napki Malka and the Kushano-Sasanians", in Kouymjian (ed.), *Near Eastern Numismatics*, pp. 116–18, who lists the historical appearances of the Nēzak princes between A.D. 651 and 137/754.

At any rate, apart from the career of Tarkhān Nēzak, the powerful and numerous nation of the Hephthalites disappears from history after its overthrow by Khusrau Anūshīrvān. Those not exterminated in battle must have been largely assimilated to the surrounding east Iranian peoples. If it is thus to some extent true that the Ghilzai tribe of modern Afghanistan are (as has often been supposed)[1] the descendants of the Hephthalites, they are at any rate wholly Pashto-speaking at the present day, and marked by no real ethnic or linguistic, but rather by tribal and dialectal differences, from the neighbouring nomadic tribesmen of Afghanistan.

If, on the evidence detailed above (p. 213) it is conceded that a Turkish-speaking group of Hephthalite origin played a prominent role amongst the nomad tribal confederacies of Arachosia during the early Islamic period, a neat explanation appears to account for the fact that Turkish-speakers are not to be found in the area today. It may be supposed that during the Mongol invasion, the nomad groups under the command of the Khwārazmian prince Jalāl al-Dīn were split by the force of the onslaught. One section of the Khalaj, apparently containing the Turkish-speaking fraction, were detached from the Khwārazmian force,[2] and in the ensuing confusion could have been swept up in the mass of Turkish tribes in the invader's train. These would have been the Khalaj who later appeared at Marv after the destruction of the city, and assisted the Mongols in exterminating the few survivors of the earlier massacre.[3] Thereafter as it seems from the narrative of Juvainī, they made off towards the west, and can only have been the founders of the Khaljī settlements still existing around Sāva and Tafrīsh in present-day Iran.[4]

At the same time, in the historical narratives of the Delhi Sultanate, "Khaljīs" are constantly mentioned as soldiers and mercenaries, besides being the founders of several dynasties. Clear evidence of their Pashto speech comes relatively late, but with regard to the Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz, founder of the Khalji dynasty (689/1290 to 695/1296), a good case has been made for his non-Turkish and Afghan background.[5] The role of Pashto under the subsequent Delhi rulers has

[1] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[1], *s.v.* Ghalzai.

[2] Minhāj al-Dīn, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Ḥabībī (Kabul, 1344), II, 117, for the Khalaj in the army of Jalāl al-Dīn; II, 119 for the subsequent fragmentation of his followers.

[3] Juvainī, *History of the World Conqueror*, tr. J. A. Boyle, I (Manchester, 1958), 168, with II, 464.

[4] G. Doerfer *et al.*, *Khalaj Materials*, Bloomington, Ind., 1971.

[5] Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* (London, 1958), p. 129.

been insufficiently investigated, but the unpublished *Chishtīya-i bihishtīya*[1] has several references to the Jalwānī and Dotānī Afghans in the aftermath of Tīmūr's invasion, and their "Afghān" speech. It is difficult to doubt that in the Indo-Muslim Sultanates the designation "Khaljī" applied in the main, or even exclusively, to Pashto-speaking tribesmen of the Ghilzai, associated Lodī, and even entirely separate clans; while in Iran the term applies to an early stratum of the Turkish population. Such appears to be the solution of the notorious and long-debated "Khaljī question"; but only linguistic studies demonstrating the existence of loan-words in either direction between these two communities could prove the soundness of this historical interpretation.

Doerfer was not concerned to discuss a presumed historical connection of the Iranian Khalaj with Afghanistan, while from the eastern angle the study of Ghilzai Pashto has tended to languish in neglect, and the possible existence in that dialect of Khaljī Turkish loan-words remains untested. Nor does there seem to be research in progress into the traditions of residual communities of Afghan origin in Rohilkand which might throw light on these questions. One can only endorse the summing-up by Doerfer: "The Iranian Khalaj with whom we are concerned prove, according to Minorsky 435,[2] to have first been mentioned in a Timurid source in A.H. 806 (= A.D. 1403); they would appear, however, already to have established themselves in their present area of settlement at an earlier date, namely in Mongolian, perhaps even in Saljuq times. It would, to be sure, be interesting to look more closely at the history of the Iranian Khalaj; however, that is not our problem."[3]

Addendum: A lecture by J. E. van Lohuizen (now in press), propounds a persuasive solution to the residual uncertainties of Kushān chronology. The existence of a Kanishka II and III had long been probable, but their absolute datings debatable. Using recent evidence of coins with the name Vāsishka (BAZHÞKO) in the style of the 3rd century A.D. (R. Göbl, "Vāsiška II, ein bisher unbekannter König der späteren Kušan", *ÄOAW* CII (1965), no. 16, pp. 293–4; *idem*, "Vāsiška, Vāskušana und Xodēšāh: weitere neufunde kušānischer Königsnamen", *AOAW* CXVI (1979), no. 4, p. 120), van Lohuizen identifies the Kanishka of the Ara inscription as Kanishka III, reigning late in the 3rd century A.D. His dating (year 41 ≙ A.D. 269) would be in the era of the second Kanishka, commencing almost exactly 100 years after the first. All texts mentioning Huv'shka will be of the second Christian, or first Kushān century, and all mentioning Vāsishka of the third Christian, or second Kushān century. Separation of the dated inscriptions of Kanishka I and II, with concurrent numerical dates, can depend only on sculptural style, Sanskritized language, or the use of devolved letterforms, and requires much further work. The chronology of the foregoing chapter remains nevertheless largely valid for the trans-Indus region where Kanishka I was the most prominent Kushān ruler.

[1] Of 'Alā al-Dīn Muḥammad Chishtī Barnāwī, cf. C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature*, I, 2, p. 1007, no. 1330. See, for example, fol. 59v of the Calcutta manuscript, Curzon 78.

[2] "The Turkish Dialect of the Khalaj", p. 435.

[3] G. Doerfer, "Das Chaladsch - eine archaische Türksprache in Zentralpersien", *ZDMG* CXVIII (1968), 79.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF INDO-GREEK AND INDO-SCYTHIAN RULERS

	BACTRIA		INDIA: PUSHKALAVATI	INDIA: TAXILA
c. 247 B.C.	Diodotus I			
	Diodotus II			
	House of Euthydemus	*House of Eucratides*		
208 B.C.				
	Euthydemus I			
	Demetrius I		Apollodotus I	
	Antimachus I Theus	Eucratides I Megas	Antimachus I Nicephorus	
	Agathocles			
	Pantaleon			
	Demetrius II			
	Euthydemus II			
155 B.C.		Eucratides II Soter	Menander I Soter	
			Eucratides I Megas	
	End of Euthydemid dynasty in Bactria	Plato	Menander I Soter	
			Zoilus I Dikaios	
			Theophilus	
			Nicias	
			Lysias	
			Philoxenus (?)	
			Antialcidas	
			Strato (Phase I)	
		Heliocles	Heliocles	Heliocles
c. 130 B.C.			Strato (Phase II)	Menander II Dikaios
		Nomad invasion of Bactria	Philoxenus (2nd reign)	
			Strato and Agathocleia	
			Hermaeus and Calliope	
			Strato (Phase III)	
			Hermaeus	Strato (Phase IV)
				Archebius
				Maues
				Apollodotus II
				Hippostratus
				Azes I
				Hippostratus
58 B.C.				Azes I
				Azilises
				Azes II

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF INDO-SCYTHIAN AND INDO-PARTHIAN EMPERORS

INDO-SCYTHIAN EMPERORS

57 B.C.	Azes I
	Azilises
	Azes II
c. A.D. 2	Fragmentation of the Indo-Scythic empire
A.D. 6	Indravarma ruling in Avaca
	Aspavarma
	Sāsān

INDO-PARTHIAN EMPERORS

A.D. 26–45	Gondophares
	Abdageses
	Orthagnes
	Pacores
	Gondophares II (?)
	Sanabares

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF KUSHĀN KINGS AND EMPERORS

Reigning A.D. 45	Kujula Kadphises (contemporary of Gondophares west of the Indus)
Reigning c. A.D. 64–78	Soter Megas (The Nameless King)
Reigning A.D. 126	Vima Kadphises
A.D. 128–51	Kanishka I
A.D. 151–5	Vāsishka (did not issue coins)
A.D. 155–87	Huvishka { Kanishka II (attested by inscriptions in A.D. 168 and 181) }
A.D. 191–226	Vāsudeva
After A.D. 226	Kanishka III (Kushān survivor east of the Indus)

APPENDIX IV

TABLE OF SIGNIFICANT INSCRIPTIONS

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE "INDO-BACTRIAN" ERA OF C. 155 B.C. (SOMETIMES CALLED THE "OLD SAKA" ERA) AND UNDATED INSCRIPTIONS OF THE EARLY PERIOD

NO.	SCRIPT	ERA	B.C.	DETAILS OF INSCRIPTION	PERSONALITIES NAMED
1	Kharoṣṭhī	—	—	Shinkot casket of Menander N. G. Majumdar, *EI* xxiv (1937), 1. D. C. Sircar, *EI* xxvi (1942), 318. S. Konow, *EI* xxvii (1947), 52. R. B. Whitehead, *NC* 1944, p. 99. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, pl. vi	*mahārāja Minedra*, with added inscription of Vijayamitra, in the year 5 (? of his reign)
2	Khar.	58	98	Maira well slabs *CII* ii, p. 11	? *Moa* (= *Maues*) *Note*: This reading is not dependable
3	Khar.	78	78	Taxila copper-plate of Patika *CII* ii, p. 23	*maharaja mahata Moga* (= Maues); Liaka Kusulaka, satrap of Chukhsha; Patika, son of Liaka
4	Khar.	Undated – 10–15 years later than no. 3		Mathurā lion-capital *CII* ii, p. 30. Lüders, *List of Brahmi Inscriptions*	*Muki raya* (? = Maues); yuvaraja Kharaosta; mahakṣatrapa Rajula; kṣatrapa Śuḍasa, son of Rajula; mahakṣatrapa Kusuluka Patika; kṣatrapa Mevaki; kṣatrapa Khardaa

			A.D.		
5	Khar.	191	36	Taxila vase of Jihonika *CII* II, p. 81	Jihonika, satrap of Chukhsa; Manigula, father of Jihonika
6	Bactrian	279	124	Surkh Kotal altar base Bivar, *BSOAS* XXVI (1963), 498	
7	Trilingual	279	124	Dasht-i Navor rock inscriptions G. Fussman, *BEFEO* LXI (1974), 22	Vhama (= *Vima Kadphises*)
8	Khar.	(2)84	129	Hashtnagar pedestal *CII* II, p. 119; reading of date emended from 384	
9	Brahmi	299	144	Kankali Tila Jaina image R. D. Banerji, *IndAnt* XXXVII (1908), 33. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The Scythian Period*, p. 56.	Unnamed *mahārāja rājātirāja*
10	Khar.	303	148	Charsadda casket N. G. Majumdar, *EI* XXIV (1937), 8	

Note: Rajula and Śoḍasa, satraps of Mathura, are mentioned in several other inscriptions of which the dating is uncertain, viz. Rajula, Mora slab (H. Lüders, *EI* XXIV (1938), 194; *List* 14), undated; Śoḍasa, Mathura slab of Amohini (see below, no. 11) and Mathura stone slab (A. Cunningham *ASIR* III, 30; *List*, 82), undated.

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE ERA OF AZES (KNOWN AS THE VIKRAMA ERA), 57 B.C.

NO.	SCRIPT	ERA	B.C.	DETAILS OF INSCRIPTION	PERSONALITIES NAMED
11	Brahmi	42	16	Mathura slab of Amohini G. Bühler, *EI* II (1892), 199. *List*, 59. E. J. Rapson, "The Date of the Amohini Votive Tablet of Mathura", in *Indian Studies in Honor of Charles Rockall Lanman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 49	*mahākṣatrapa Śoḍāsa*
			A.D.		
12	Khar.	63	6	Indravarma casket from Avaca H. W. Bailey, *JRAS* 1978, pp. 3–13	Indravarma; *maharayasa Ayasa atidasa*
13	Khar.	14 regnal	—	Seṇavarma gold scroll H. W. Bailey, *JRAS* 1980, pp. 21–29	Seṇavarma, king of Oḍī; Bhadaseṇa, Mediśaseṇa, Vasuseṇa, Uttaraseṇa, Ayidaseṇa, former kings of Oḍī; Sadaṣkaṇo, son of Kuyula Kataphśa, Great King, King of Kings
14	Khar.	103	46	Takht-i Bāhī slab *CII* II, p. 62	*mahārāja Guduvhara*; *erjhuna Kapa* (? = Kujula Kadphises)

15	Khar.	122	65	Panjtār stone *CII* II, p. 67	*maharaja Gushana* (? = Soter Megas)
16	Khar.	134	77	Kalawan copper-plate S. Konow, *EI* XXI (1932), 251. S. Konow, *JRAS* 1932, p. 949	*ayasa* "in the era of Azes"
17	Khar.	136	79	Taxila silver scroll *CII* II, p. 70	*ayasa* "in the era of Azes"; *maharaja rajatiraja devaputra Khushana* (? = Soter Megas)
18	Khar.	184 or 187	127 or 130	Khalatse boulder	*maharaja Uvima Kavthisa* (? = Vima Kadphises)

Note: This inscription is the key to the present series. The date of Gondophares is approximately known from his synchronism with the apostle Thomas. On numismatic grounds Gondophares and Jihonika have been thought contemporary, which helps to link this with the preceding series.

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE ERA OF THE WESTERN SATRAPS (ŚAKA ERA), A.D. 78

NO.	SCRIPT	ERA	B.C.	DETAILS OF INSCRIPTION	PERSONALITIES NAMED
19	Brahmi	42	119	Nasik cave of Uṣavadata Senart, *EI* VIII (1905), 82. *List*, 1133	Uṣavadāta only, but see below; mentions also years 41 and 45
20	Brahmi	—	—	Nasik cave of Uṣavadata Senart, *EI* VIII (1905), 78. *List*, 1131	Uṣavadāta, son of Dinika, and son-in-law of the rajan Kṣaharata kṣatrapa Nahapana
21	Brahmi	—	—	Nasik cave of Dakhamitra Senart, *EI* VIII (1905), 81. *List*, 1132	Dakhamitra, daughter of the rajan Kṣaharata kṣatrapa Nahapana, and wife of Uṣavadāta, son of Dinika
22	Brahmi	—	—	Nasik cave of Dakhamitra Senart, *EI* VIII (1905), 85. *List*, 1135	Same persons as the preceding item
23	Brahmi	46	123	Junnar cave of Ayama Bühler and Burgess, *Arch. Survey of Western India* IV, 103. *List*, 1174	Ayama, minister to rajan mahakhatapa sāmi Nahapana
24	Brahmi	52	129	Andhau (Cutch) pillars R. D. Banerji, *EI* XVI (1921), 19	rajan Caṣṭana, son of Zamotika, and rajan Rudradaman, son of Jayadaman (presumably ruling jointly)
25	Brahmi	72	149	Junagadh rock Kielhorn, *EI* VIII (1905), 36. *List*, 963	rajan mahakṣatrapa Rudradaman, grandson of the rajan mahakṣatrapa Caṣṭana

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE ERA OF KANISHKA, A.D. 128

NO.	SCRIPT	ERA	B.C.	DETAILS OF INSCRIPTION	PERSONALITIES NAMED
				KANISHKA	
26	Khar.	—	—	Peshawar casket of Kanishka *CII* II, 135. T. Burrow, *Journal of the Greater India Society* XI (1944), 13. B. N. Mukherjee, "Shāh-jī-kī-Ḍherī casket inscription", *BMQ* XXVIII (1964) 39–46	*maha*]*raja Kani*[*ṣka*
27	Brahmi	2	129	Kosam Boddhisatva image K. G. Goswami, *EI* XXIV (1938), 211	*mahārāja Kaṇiṣka*
28	Brahmi	3	130	Sārnāth Boddhisatva image of Bala J. P. Vogel, *EI* VIII (1905), 173. *List*, 925	*mahārāja Kāṇiṣka*; *mahākṣatrapa Kharapallāna kṣatrapa Vanaspara*
29	Brahmi	3	130	Sārnāth *List*, 927	*mahārāja Kaṇiṣka*
30	Khar.	5	132	'Buddha of Brussels' G. Fussman, 'Documents epigraphiques kouchans', *BEFEO* LXI (1974), 54–8	No ruler named
31	Brahmi	5	132	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image G. Bühler, *EI*, I (1898), 381. H. Lüders, *IndAnt* XXXIII, 34. *List*, 18 (Addenda and Corrigenda, p. 163)	*devaputra Ka*[*ṇi*]*ṣka*
32	Brahmi	7	134	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image G. Bühler, *EI* I (1898), 391. *List*, 21	*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra ṣāhi Kaṇiṣka*
33	Brahmi	8	135	Bhaḍār Naga image Y. R. Gupte, *EI* XVII (1923–4), 10. Agrawala II, no. 211	*Kānikkha mahārāja rājātirāja ṣāhi*

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE ERA OF KANISHKA, A.D. 128 (cont.)

NO.	SCRIPT	ERA		DETAILS OF INSCRIPTION	PERSONALITIES NAMED
34	Brahmi	9	136	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image A. Cunningham, *ASIR* III (1873), 31. H. Lüders, *IndAnt* XXXIII (1904), 37. *List*, 22 (add., p. 163)	*mahārāja Kaṇiṣka*
35	Brahmi	10	137	Mathurā (British Museum) sculptured slab H. Lüders, *EI* IX (1906), 239. *List*, 23. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, no. 182	*mahārāja devaputra Kāṇiṣka*
36	Khar.	11	138	Sui Vihar copper-plate *CII* II, 138	*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra Kan*[*i*]*ṣka*
37	Khar.	11	138	Zeda stone block *CII* II, 142	*muro*(*ṇ*)*ḍa marjhaka Kaṇiṣka rāja*
38	Brahmi	16	143	Mathurā City, Khanskhar Agrawala I, no. 2740. H. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, no. 157	*mahārāja Kāṇiṣka*
39	Brahmi	17	144	Mathurā K. D. Bajpai, *Jaina Antiquary* XVI (1950), 14	
40	Khar.	18	145	Māṅikiāla stone block *CII* II, 145	*mahārāja Kaṇiṣka*
41	Brahmi	20	147	Mathurā Buddhist image D. R. Sahni, *JRAS* 1924, p. 399. Agrawala I, no. 1558	*mahārāja Kāṇikṣa*
42	Brahmi	23	150	Mathurā (Curzon Museum) pedestal D. R. Sahni, *JRAS* 1924, p. 400. H. Lüders, B. C. Law (ed.), *D. R. Bhandarkar Volume*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 284. Agrawala I, no. 1602. B. C. Chhabra, *EI* XXVIII (1949), 42	*mahārāja Kāṇi*[*ṣka*

VĀSISHKA

43	Khar.	20	147	Kamra (Campbellpur) stone B. N. Mukherjee, *Indian Museum Bulletin* VIII, no. 2 (1973), 111–17	*maharaja rajatiraja mahata . . . Vajeṣka Gushana*
44	Brahmi	24	151	Īsāpur pillar J. P. Vogel, *JRAS* 1910, p. 1311. *List*, 149. Agrawala IV, no. Q 13	*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra sāhi Vuāsiṣka*
45	Brahmi	28	155	Sānchī Buddhist statue G. Bühler, *EI* II (1899), 369. J. P. Vogel, *JRAS* 1910, p. 1314. *List*, 161 (add., p. 175)	*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra ṣāh[i Vāsaṣka*

HUVISHKA

46	Brahmi	28	155	Mathurā (Chaurasi Jaina temple) pillar S. Konow, *EI* XXI (1931–2), 55. Agrawala IV, no. 1913. Bailey, *BSOAS* XIV (1952), 420	*devaputra ṣāhi Huviṣka*
47	Bactrian	31	158	Surkh Kotal block of Nokonzoko Maricq, *JA* 1958, pp. 345–440. Henning, "The Bactrian inscription", p. 48	Nokonzoko, Borzomihro, Kozgaški-pouro, Astiloganseigi, all holders of the rank of Kanārang
48	Brahmi	31	158	Bhaḍār Buddhist image *List*, 13a (add., p. 162). Agrawala I, no. A 71	*Huviṣka*
49	Brahmi	33	160	Mathurā (Chaubārā) Buddhist image J. P. Vogel, *EI* VIII (1905–6), 181. *List*, 38	*mahārāja devaputra Huv[i]ṣka*

50	Brahmi	35	162	Lākhanū Buddhist image J. P. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, Allahabad, 1910, p. 62. *List*, 151a. Agrawala I, no. A 63	*mahārāja devaputra Huveṣka*
51	Brahmi	38	165	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) elephant-capital *List*, 41	*mahārāja devaputra Huviṣka*
52	Brahmi	39	166	Mathurā Boddhisatva image R. D. Sahni, *EI* XIX (1927), 66	*mahārāja*] *devaputra Huviṣka*
53	Brahmi	40	167	Chhaṛgāon Naga image J. P. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, p. 88. *List*, 149b. Agrawala II, no. C 13. H. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, no. 137	*mahārāja rājātirāja Huviṣka*

KANISHKA II (?)

54	Khar.	41	168	Ārā stone *CII* II, p. 162	*mahārāja rājātiraja devaputra kaïsara* (?) *Vajheṣkaputra Kaniṣka*

HUVISHKA

55	Brahmi	44	171	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image G. Bühler, *EI* I (1898), 387	*mahārāja Huviṣka*
56	Brahmi	45	172	Bombay University Library, Buddhist image D. R. Bhandarkar, "A Kushana stone-inscription", *JASBB* XX (1902), 269. *List*, 43	[*mahārāja*] *Hūviṣka devaputra*

57	Brahmi	48	175	Lucknow Museum Sambhavanta image R. D. Banerji, *EI* x (1910), 112. *List*, 45a	*mahārāja Huveṣka*
58	Brahmi	48	175	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina stone Cunningham, *ASIR* III (1873), 34. *List*, 46	*mahārāja Huviṣka*
59	Brahmi	50	177	Mathurā Buddhist (?) image Growse, *Mathurā*, 2nd edn. p. 154. *List*, 51 (add., p. 165)	*mahārāja devaputra Huviṣka*
60	Khar.	51	178	Wardak vase *CII* II, 165	*maharaja rajatiraja Ho* (or *Hu*)*veṣka*
61	Brahmi	51	178	Mathurā (Jamālpur) Buddhist image F. S. Growse, *Mathurā*, 2nd edn., Oudh, 1880, p. 107. *List*, 52 (add., p. 166)	*mahārāja devaputra Huveṣka*

KANISHKA II (?)

62	Brahmi	54	181	Mathurā pedestal D. R. Sahni, *EI* XIX (1927), 96	*mahārāja devaputra Kaniṣka*

Note: The reading for the date of this inscription is subject to some doubt. The figure adopted here is that of V. V. Mirashi, *EI* XXVI (1941–2), 293. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The "Scythian" Period*, p. 302, adopts a different date, 114, which may be preferable. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, no. 81 reads the date as 14; the script is unusual, and the record possibly even of Kanishka III, with regnal dating.

INSCRIPTIONS DATED IN THE ERA OF KANISHKA, A.D. 128 (cont.)

HUVISHKA

63	Brahmi	58	185	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image *List*, 42 (add., p. 165)	*maharaja Huviṣka*
64	Brahmi	60	187	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image G. Bühler, *EI* I (1898), 386. *List*, 56	*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra Huvaṣka*

VĀSUDEVA

65	Brahmi	64 or 67	191 or 194	Mathurā (Palikhra) Buddhist image D. C. Sircar, *EI* XXX (1954), 181	*devapu]tra Vāsudeva*
66	Brahmi	74	201	Mathurā (Jamālpur) slab H. Lüders, *EI* IX (1907), 241. *List*, 60	*mahārāja r[ājātirāja] devaputra Vāsu[deva*
67	Brahmi	80	207	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image G. Bühler, *EI* I (1898), 392. *List*, 66 (add., p. 167)	*mahārāja Vāsudeva*
68	Brahmi	83	210	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image Cunningham, *ASIR* III (1873), 34. *List*, 68 (add., p. 167). Agrawala III, no. B 2	*mahārāja Vāsudeva*
69	Brahmi	84	211	Mathurā, Balabhadra Kuṇḍ Jaina image *List*, 69a (p. 168). Agrawala III, no. B 4	*mahārāja rājātiraja devaputra [ṣā]hi Vāsudeva*

70	Brahmi	87	214	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image Cunningham, *ASIR* III (1873), 35. *List*, 72	*maharaja rajatiraja ṣāhir Vvāsudeva*
71	Brahmi	93	—	Mathurā, New Bridge Buddha image V. N. Srivasta, *EI* XXXVII, pt. iv, 1967, 151–3	*mahārāja dēvaputra vasudēva*
72	Brahmi	98	225	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina image Cunningham, *ASIR* III (1873), 35. *List*, 76	*rājña Vāsudeva*
73	Brahmi	99	226	Mathurā (Kaṅkālī) Jaina panel V. A. Smith, *ASI* (New Imperial series) xx (1901), 24. Reading as emended by H. Lüders, *JRAS* 1912, p. 154. *List*, 75 (add., p. 168)	No emperor mentioned

Note: Not included in this list is the Sānchī inscription of the *rājā Vaskuṣāṇa* or *Vaskuṣāṇa* of the year 22 or 122; cf. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The "Scythian" Period*, p. 313, of which the interpretation is uncertain.

CHAPTER 6

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF TRANSOXIANA

Transoxiana was the largest country outside the limits of Iran proper that was from early times inhabited by Iranian peoples – either as settled agriculturists (the Sogdians and the Chorasmians) or as nomads (the Sakas). Owing to its geographical situation it came only in particular periods into the field of vision of those peoples who have left us historical chronicles and other forms of written sources. In reconstructing the political history of Transoxiana between the 3rd century B.C. and the 7th century A.D. it is necessary to take into account not only the fragmentary character of the information at our disposal, but also the point of view from which Transoxiana is being mentioned or described.

From the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. down to the middle of the 2nd century B.C. we see the land beyond the Oxus mainly through the eyes of Greek and Latin writers (Strabo, Arrian, Diodorus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Pompeius Trogus in Justin's epitome, Ptolemy, Pliny and others), as the far north-eastern edge of the civilized world.

From the latter part of the 2nd century B.C. to the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. we are submitted to the ideas and impressions of the court historiographers of the Celestial Empire, the writers of the *Shih-chi*, *Han shu* and *Hou Han-shu*, whose "Sinocentrism" was not at all confined merely to their geographical view from the east.

Starting in the 3rd century A.D., we must either consider Transoxiana from the standpoint of the Sasanian kings (Shāpūr I's inscription on the Ka'aba-yi Zardusht, and other Sasanian inscriptions) who carried out expeditions beyond the Oxus and obviously did not try to play down their successes, or follow the official historiography of the late Sasanian period, as reflected in Islamic sources, such as Ṭabarī.

The events of the 4th to 6th centuries that were connected with Transoxiana are illuminated by the sources – Greek and Latin, Persian and Arabic, Syriac, Armenian and Chinese – from different angles, but the selective character of the information given in each source, together with the tendentiousness of its point of view, makes it very difficult to

reconstruct the total picture. Only for the 7th and 8th centuries does the detailed information provided by the various sources lend itself to coordination, and for the first quarter of the 8th century already a few authentic diplomatic documents are known to us.

The archaeological data assembled in recent decades furnish very valuable material for study of the material and spiritual culture of Transoxiana, but for the reconstruction of its political history they can be used only to a very limited extent.

For this reason, the basic source, around which all the other data must be assembled and systematized, has to be the numismatic material – both the coins of Transoxiana itself and also information from finds of foreign (imported) coins beyond the Oxus.

The issuing in Transoxiana of a special currency of the country's own began with the striking of the so-called "barbarous imitations". We know of local silver imitations of early Seleucid coins of the patterns of Alexander's time (pl. 19 (1, 2)) and imitations of the coins of Antiochus I (pl. 19 (4–11); on the reverse side, a horse's head), and also numerous imitations of Greco-Bactrian coins – tetradrachms of Euthydemus (pl. 20 (1–4)), tetradrachms of Eucratides (pl. 23 (1)), obols of Eucratides (pl. 21 (12)), tetradrachms of Heliocles (copper – pl. 22 (5–8)). In order to be able to use these imitations as an historical source, it is necessary to understand the specific circumstances in which they were struck and circulated.

In the 1st centuries B.C. and A.D. many countries and peoples situated on the periphery of the Hellenistic and Roman civilization passed through the stage of striking "barbarous imitations". Perhaps the closest analogy as regards both the external phenomena and the essential processes underlying them is provided by a comparison between the "barbarous imitations" of Transoxiana and those of the western European tribes and peoples. In both cases there occurred a penetration of foreign coins into regions which were still without their own currency and ignorant of the circulation of money – and with these coins there arrived the idea itself of using for commercial dealings metal tokens of a certain shape and appearance. Subsequently the foreign coins were "reproduced" by local craftsmen – usually at a lower artistic and technical level. From one "generation" of imitations to another, mistakes and deviations from the prototype accumulated, representations "disintegrated" and lost their original meaning, and the inscriptions either became quite illegible or simply disappeared.

The usual metrological methods of investigation cannot be applied to these "barbarous imitations": their weight fluctuated a great deal, most often with a tendency to reduction (or else a concealed reduction was effected by using inferior metal in the minting).

All these signs testify to an important difference of principle between the coins of the economically developed civilizations and the "barbarous imitations": the rate of exchange of the former was based on their value, that is, it depended, in the first place, on the value of the gold or silver expended in making the coin, whereas that of the latter was conventional, and determined not only by their scarcity but also by the authority of the ruling power (whether manifested in tradition, or in a treaty) that was operative over a defined territory.

This is the essence of the distinction to be made between "civilized" and "peripheral" coins, from which follow three propositions that enable us to use "barbarous imitations" for reconstructing political history:

(1) The striking of "barbarous imitations" always occurs outside the political frontiers of a society with a developed monetary circulation;

(2) The "habitats" that we define for the different groups of "barbarous imitations" must, generally speaking, outline the frontiers within which influence was wielded by the authority (the ruling power) which determined the conventional rate of exchange of these imitations – that is, political frontiers;

(3) "Barbarous imitations" (as is shown by many examples from the western European and other peripheries of the Hellenistic and Roman world) correspond to a particular stage not only of economic but also of social development. A society of this kind is usually without a king, having only chiefs, tribal leaders and councils of elders in various forms; there is a nobility, but no clear-cut stratification into classes has yet occurred; as a rule, town life has not developed in such a society, and there is no written language.

The period of "barbarous imitations" was succeeded by a period of independent local strikings in Transoxiana, as though the country had outgrown the stage of imitation. In some cases the former patterns remained unaltered, but added to them was a *tamgha* (ownership mark) or a local legend (e.g. the early Sogdian coins on the pattern of Euthydemus' tetradrachms – pl. 20 (5–12)), while in others the new issues only showed continuity in relation to the local "barbarous imitations",

while already substantially differing from them. Thus, the coins of Hyrcodes (pl. 19 (13–25)) and the early Sogdian coins with a representation of an archer (pl. 21 (1–11)) continue the local imitations of the drachms of Antiochus I; the early Chorasmian coins (pl. 23 (1–7)) originate from imitations of the tetradrachms of Eucratides; the coins of Sapadbizes (pl. 21 (13)) are derived from the imitations of the obols of Eucratides; and so on. Some of these issues occurred before the 6th and 7th centuries, and observation of their weight (and quality of silver) shows that their rate of exchange was apparently still conventional.

Many changes in the minting of coins in Transoxiana were closely bound up with the country's external political contacts. Beginning in the 4th to 6th centuries, when for a variety of reasons a large number of Sasanian coins found their way across the Oxus, the locally minted coins (the "Bukhārkhudāt" coins and the series preceding them) showed a strong influence from both Sasanian minting practice and Sasanian coin-iconography. From the second half of the 7th century, after the establishment of close diplomatic relations with T'ang China, there began in Transoxiana (in Sughd, northern Tukhāristān and a number of other regions) the issue of cast copper coins on the Chinese pattern, and from the second half of the 8th century the influence of the caliphate was predominant in the minting practice of Transoxiana.

I

In reconstructing the political history of Transoxiana in the 3rd to 1st centuries B.C. it is very important to consider the location of the northern frontier of the Greek possessions in Asia, which we can define only hypothetically.

When, after their victorious march across Asia, Alexander's army encountered stubborn resistance in Transoxiana and became bogged down there for over two years, the Greeks could regard only Bactria as conquered, and felt their position on the far side of the Oxus to be precarious. Clitus, to whom Alexander had just transferred, from the Persian Artabazus, the administration of Bactria and Sogdiana, said to Alexander at the banquet at Maracanda, "You assign to me the province of Sogdiana, so often rebellious, and not only untamed but not even capable of being subdued. I am sent to wild beasts, to which nature has given incorrigible recklessness".[1] The settlements of

[1] Quintus Curtius Rufus VIII. i. 35.

Greek soldier-colonists (κατοικίαι), by means of which Alexander wished to keep these regions in submission, were well populated and constituted a force to be reckoned with. Their size can be judged by the information we have[1] regarding the revolt of the Greek settlers in Bactria and Sogdiana in 323 B.C. in favour of returning home after Alexander's death; the army of the rebels numbered twenty thousand foot and three thousand horse, although apparently not all the colonists took part in the revolt.

Alexander also tried to strengthen his position in Bactria by winning over the local nobles to his side: he himself married Roxana, daughter of Oxyartes, one of the leaders of the Bactrians, and his comrades-in-arms married other representatives of the local nobility (in particular, Seleucus married Apame, daughter of Spitamenes). The position of Greek authority beyond the Oxus must have been especially shaky as a result of the defeat of the revolt of 323 B.C., after the severe suppression of which hardly any of the participants returned to Transoxiana.

Although in area Sogdiana (if we take into account the whole territory between the Oxus and the Jaxartes) was by far the largest of the Greek territorial-administrative units in Asia, it was often mentioned, even in Alexander's lifetime, along with Bactria, as an appendage to the latter. After Alexander's death, Perdiccas in 323 B.C. appointed Philip, son of Balakros, to be satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana,[2] and in 321 Antipater gave Bactria and Sogdiana (again joined together) to Stasanor.[3] It is hard to believe that at this time, either, actual Greek authority extended over the whole territory of Sogdiana. More probably what was meant was some part of this territory directly adjacent to Bactria. In so far as the Oxus, with the river Vakhsh as its source served as the boundary, between Bactria and Sogdiana, it is most likely that the Greeks at that time wielded power in Transoxiana only over part of the right-bank valley of the Oxus, extending no further north than the Ḥiṣār range.

This situation hardly altered under the first Seleucids. In 311–302 B.C. Seleucus I fought against the Median satrap Nicanor and consolidated his authority in the eastern part of the state. The conquest of Bactria by Seleucus, on his way to India,[4] is usually dated 306 B.C., but we have no information about any of his campaigns in Transoxiana, although the Sogdians are mentioned (along with the Parthians, Hyrcanians and Bactrians) among the peoples subject to him.[5] What

[1] Diodorus XVIII. 7.
[2] Diodorus XVII. 57. 3; XVIII. 3. 3.
[3] Diodorus XVIII. 39. 6.
[4] Justin XV. 4. 11.
[5] Appian ("The Syrian Wars"). 55.

is implied here, most probably, is those Sogdians who lived just across the Oxus, along the right bank of the river.

There is no reliable testimony to the extent of the Seleucids' power in Transoxiana for the later period, either, when Seleucus' son and future successor Antiochus I (who was Bactrian on his mother's side) became his deputy and co-ruler in the eastern satrapies (he was co-ruler from 293 to 280 B.C.). We have information about the destruction by "barbarians" of Alexandria in Margiana[1] and of the building by Antiochus Soter of a new city, Antiochia Margiana, the oasis which was encircled by a wall 1,500 stadia in length.[2] But the hypothetical "building", by analogy with these events, of two Antiochias in Transoxiana ("Antiochia Tarmata" in place of Alexandria-on-the-Oxus, with its site at Tirmidh, and "Antiochia in Scythia" on the site of Alexandria Eschata), is based on a very late and insufficiently reliable source.

The only definite evidence for penetration by the Seleucids into Transoxiana in the 3rd century B.C. is the expedition carried out in the eighties by the Milesian Demodamas, son of Aristides, a Seleucid general, about the aims and results of which we have no detailed information. It is difficult to suppose that the Seleucids regarded themselves as masters of the regions through which passed this expedition, the very mention of which has come down to us precisely because of its exceptional character, and which required for its realization, according to J. Wolski,[3] the use of troops from the central and western provinces of the Seleucid state. All we know is that Demodamas crossed the Jaxartes and erected there an altar in honour of Apollo.[4]

When he became sole king, Antiochus I (280–61 B.C.) was fully occupied with affairs on the western frontiers of the Seleucid state, and under Antiochus II (261–46 B.C.) the eastern satrapies fell away (Diodotus in Bactria, Andragoras in Parthia and Hyrcania) and all connection was lost between the Seleucids and Transoxiana.

At this time there was still no minting of local coins in Transoxiana, or any regular circulation of foreign coins: we know of only two indubitable finds of Seleucid coins (at Afrāsiyāb, a site in Old Samarkand), and in the museums of Tashkent and Samarkand there are a

[1] Pliny VI. 18. 47.
[2] Strabo XI. 10. 2.
[3] "L'Effondrement de la domination des Séleucides", pp. 23–4 (see Bibliography, p. 1292).
[4] Pliny VI. 49; G. Julius Solinus 49. 5, 6.

few specimens of unknown origin. True, the first coins that Sogdiana knew were Seleucid ones: they it was that served as prototypes for the very earliest local imitations (from the end of the 3rd to the 1st century B.C.). If, however, we are talking of political frontiers, then the very existence of such imitations must testify *not* to the inclusion of Sogdiana in the Seleucid state, but rather to the fact that the main areas inhabited by the Sogdians (in the basin of the river Zarafshān) lay outside the limits of Seleucid authority.

Undoubtedly the power of the Greeks in Asia did not extend as far as Chorasmia, the historical fate of which did not always coincide with that of the other peoples of Transoxiana; in particular, the Chorasmians did not take part in the struggle against Alexander's army, either as part of Darius' host or after his defeat, when operations moved beyond the Oxus.

When the king of the Chorasmians, Pharasmanes (as Arrian calls him; to Quintus Curtius Rufus he is Phrataphernes), visited Alexander in Bactria, he was accompanied by 1,500 horsemen.[1] Pharasmanes offered Alexander his aid ("to be his guide and to get everything ready that the army would need"), if Alexander wanted to march against the "Colchians and Amazons" who were the Chorasmians' neighbours. Alexander thanked Pharasmanes, and "made a treaty of friendship with him, but said that it was inopportune for him to go to Pontus", and "asked Phrasmanes to postpone his aid" until such time as, having conquered India, and become master of all Asia, Alexander should "return to Hellas and from there proceed with all his land and sea forces through the Hellespont and the Propontis, and fall upon Pontus".

This passage is sometimes seen as evidence of Chorasmian hegemony at that time over the north Caspian steppes and of actual neighbourly relations between the Chorasmians and the peoples living beside the Black Sea, even to the extent of an analogy being drawn with the khanate of the Golden Horde. It is more probable, however, that Alexander's refusal was the result of very vague geographical ideas on the part of the "conqueror of the world", confusing (as, indeed, often happened) the Black Sea with the Aral Sea, or with the Caspian, and misunderstanding where it was that Pharasmanes was urging him to march.

Alexander himself looked upon this fleeting encounter as signifying

[1] Arrian, *Anabasis* IV. 15. 4–6 and Quintus Curtius Rufus VIII. i. 8 differ slightly about this event.

the conquest of Chorasmia;[1] but, according to one version,[2] it was to Chorasmia that Spitamenes fled after his final defeat, and the Greek forces did not decide to pursue him thither.

There is no evidence for any penetration by the Greeks into Chorasmia in subsequent years (and still less of the extension to that country of the political power of the Greek rulers in Asia). We have reliable evidence for the rule of Alexander's successors in Asia over Bactria, Parthia and Hyrcania only. These regions were closely connected with Central Asia in their historical destiny and in their spiritual and material culture, but they lay outside Transoxiana. The most important regions of Transoxiana – the greater part of Sughd and Khwārazm – remained at that time beyond the limits of the political authority of the Seleucids.

The northern frontier of the Greek possessions could not be pushed deep into Transoxiana during the following period, either, from the middle of the 3rd century to the last quarter of the 2nd century B.C., when the Greek rulers of Bactria were at the height of their power. It would be hard to suppose that the political history of Transoxiana was not closely bound up with that of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. But there are no grounds for even assuming that beyond the Oxus there existed a "Greco-Sogdian kingdom" comparable to Greco-Bactria, or any other sort of independent Greek realm. The statement that Euthydemus and his supporters "first and foremost won over to rebellion Bactria and all the adjoining territory"[3] cannot be interpreted as meaning that Euthydemus, before becoming king of Greco-Bactria, was at some period ruler of Sogdiana (Margiana, Areia). The mention of the Sogdians among the peoples with whom the Bactrians fought wars in the time of Eucratides[4] is also not evidence that Sogdiana was subject to the Greco-Bactrian king.

All this obliges us to consider more cautiously, too, Strabo's statement[5] that the Bactrians "also ruled over Sogdiana, lying above Bactria towards the east, between the river Oxus, which separates the land of the Bactrians from Sogdiana, and the river Jaxartes". The second part of this passage, in which the situation of Sogdiana in relation to Bactria and its natural frontiers is described, is merely a geographical definition of what is meant by Sogdiana, obviously going back to the time of Alexander and the accounts of his campaigns. The

1 *Anabasis* VII. 10. 6.
2 Strabo XI. 8. 8.
3 Strabo XI. ix. 2.
4 Justin XLI, 6. 1–6.
5 XI. 11. 2.

statement that the Bactrians "also ruled over Sogdiana", to judge by the context, can refer only to the "best days" of Greco-Bactria, that is, can have in mind only a temporary subjection of some lands inhabited by Sogdians. In that case – as also for the period between the end of the 4th century and the middle of the 3rd B.C. – we may infer that the authority of the Greco-Bactrian kings extended not over all Sughd but only over some of the Sogdian territories on the farther side of the Oxus, directly adjoining the northern boundaries of Bactria.

Reference is sometimes made, as though to a decisive argument, to the finds of Greco-Bactrian coins that have been made beyond the Oxus. It is true that finds of coins of many Greco-Bactrian kings have been made on the right bank of the Oxus – coins of Diodotus (copper), Euthydemus (silver and copper), Demetrius (silver and copper), Antimachus (silver), Agathocles (nickel and copper), Eucratides (silver) and Heliocles (silver). However, even the Tirmidh area, where the largest proportion of these finds of coins beyond the Oxus has been made, falls far short of the regions lying to the south of that river as regards the number of finds. In all the other places in Transoxiana only isolated finds have occurred. The farther north one goes, the more rarely are Greco-Bactrian coins met with. In districts directly abutting on the right bank of the Oxus (the valleys of the Kāfirnihān and the Surkhān Daryā, and the Ḥiṣār valley), there have been isolated finds of silver coins of Euthydemus, Demetrius and Eucratides; somewhat more frequently, copper coins of Euthydemus have been found here (with the head of Zeus and a prancing horse). North of the line of the Ḥiṣār ridge, in the basin of the river Zarafshān, finds of Greco-Bactrian coins are extremely rare; a tetradrachm of Antimachus bearing Euthydemus' name was found in 1927 in the course of land-shifting work that happened to be going on at Panjikent; two obols of Eucratides were found in 1911 in Samarkand; five obols of Antimachus were found before 1917 near Shahr-i Sabz (Kish). Since the 1930s, when extensive archaeological investigations began in the Zarafshān valley, right down to the present time, not a single Greco-Bactrian coin has been found during these digs, although hundreds of burial mounds of the 1st centuries B.C. and A.D. have been opened, and dozens of sites, forts and settlements of different periods investigated.

As for the other parts of Transoxiana, only in Chorasmia have there been finds of two Greco-Bactrian coins (a tetradrachm of Eucratides and a drachm of Euthydemus): none have turned up in Chāch (Shāsh) or Ushrūsana or Farghāna.

We may thus presume, on the basis of the coins found, that only Tirmidh and the surrounding district was within the Greco-Bactrian dominions. The remaining valleys of southern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan, where at that time they did not strike their own coins, must be seen as a sort of monetary vacuum into which Greco-Bactrian money flowed as foreign currency; it was precisely in this region that between the end of the 2nd and the 1st century B.C. the issue of local imitations of Greco-Bactrian coins began.

As regards the remaining areas of Transoxiana, they are fully comparable, in respect of the number of Greco-Bactrian coins found there, with areas very remote from Bactria which were never subordinate to that state, such as southern Turkmenistan (a tetradrachm of Euthydemus on the Nisā site; a tetradrachm of Eucratides at the settlement of Garry-Kārīz), Transcaucasia (Greco-Bactrian coins in a hoard from Kobala) and even the Ukraine (one find of a tetradrachm of Heliocles); any conclusion concerning political frontiers would in these cases be quite futile.

What was there, in those days, beyond the Oxus? For the end of the 3rd century B.C. (about 206) we have unambiguous indications about this in the classical sources. Euthydemus, besieged by a Seleucid army in Zariaspa (Bactria), asked that Antiochus III be told that "the situation of both sides is becoming unsafe". "Along the frontier", he went on, "stands an immense horde of nomads, threatening us both; should the barbarians cross the frontier the country will certainly be conquered by them".[1] The nomad horde remained behind the natural frontier, the river Oxus, and this time, apparently, did not cross it. In the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. a large part of Transoxiana was evidently in the hands of nomadic tribes, but as to who these tribes were, and why they approached the borders of Bactria, the classical sources tell us almost nothing.

II

We must now look at Transoxiana from the standpoint of the east. Thanks to the Chinese chronicles (*Shih-chi, Han shu*) we know of conflicts at the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. between two large groups of nomadic tribes, the Hsiung-nu and the Yüeh-chih. These conflicts occurred far to the east of Transoxiana, and as a result of them, the Yue-chi tribes (who are usually identified

[1] Polybius XI. 34.

with the Tochari and Asiani of the classical writers) were forced into Transoxiana, crowding southward in their turn the tribes of Saka origin. Very probably the nomad hordes of whose presence on the Bactrian border Euthydemus spoke were Sakas. The displacement of Sakas across the Oxus and towards the south and south-west, under the pressure of the Yüeh-chih tribes, took place much later, around the middle of the 2nd century B.C.; already in the 1st century B.C. they appear in the political arena far to the south of Transoxiana as the "numismatic" dynasty which has left to us the so-called Indo-Saka coins.[1]

The first detailed description of the "western borderland" in Chinese sources is based on the report of Chang-Ch'ien who was sent by the Chinese Imperial court to the Great Yüeh-chih for the purpose of concluding an alliance with them against the Hsiung-nu. Chang-Ch'ien, writing about the situation after 128 B.C., names five large countries in the "western borderland", only one of which, Ta-yuan, is inhabited by settled cultivators, the others – Wu-sun, K'ang-kiu, Yen-tsai and Great Yüeh-chih – are all the homes of nomads.

Ta-yuan, with up to seventy towns, large and small, and a few hundred thousand inhabitants, was the most populous country in the "western borderland". The generally accepted identification of Ta-yuan with Farghāna has quite recently been questioned by E. Pulleyblank. The identification of Ta-yuan with Sughd, which he proposes instead, is in any case no more incompatible with the totality of other data. Ta-yuan is not named among the countries subject to the Great Yüeh-chih. There is no mention of the latter, either, in somewhat later information about Ta-yuan – in connection with the unsuccessful expedition of a Chinese force ("6,000 horsemen from the dependent countries and a few tens of thousands of young ne'er-do-wells from China") in 104 B.C. against Ta-yuan in order to obtain some of the famous *argamak* horses of that locality, or in connection with the more successful repeat-expedition of 102–1 B.C., for the equipment of which "the whole Empire was brought into action". The men of Ta-yuan were saved from complete defeat by referring to the "allied armies that were expected from K'ang-Kiu", the country lying to the north-west of Ta-yuan. If Ta-yuan really was Sughd then we possess some notion of the latter's internal political set-up. All affairs in this country were decided by "elders", but there was also a "ruler". Before 102 B.C.

[1] See ch. 5, pp. 192ff.

the ruler of Ta-yuan was one Mugua (Mu-Kua); after the conclusion of peace, the Chinese "made ruler of Ta-yuan" a local grandee named Motsai (Mei-ts'ai); in 100 B.C., "with general consent (of the elders of Ta-yuan) they killed him and called to the throne Shanfynya (Ch'an-föng), younger brother of Mugua".[1]

K'ang-kiu was a country of nomads, most probably located (regardless of whether Ta-yuan be identified with Farghāna or with Sughd) on the middle reaches of the Jaxartes. Chang-Ch'ien tells us that K'ang-kiu "recognises the suzerainty of the Yüeh-chih in the south, and in the east that of the Hsiung-nu".[2] In the *Han shu*, where later information is also given (the account goes down to 25 A.D.), it is merely said that "K'ang-kiu is dependent on the Hsiung-nu to the eastward".

The nomad realm of Yen-tsai ("nearly 2,000 *li* from K'ang-kiu, to the north-west") lay "beside a great lake the shores of which are not high", and can be situated either on the lower reaches of the Jaxartes (i.e. beside the Aral Sea) or else beside the Caspian Sea, this being less likely.

Chang-Ch'ien's statements about the Great Yüeh-chih can be coordinated with those of classical writers concerning Transoxiana. He found them to the north of the river Guishui (i.e. the Oxus); they had "an army of 100,000 to 200,000 combatants",[3] but, "dwelling in a free land, rarely subjected to enemy attacks, they are disposed to live peacefully".[4] That the Great Yüeh-chih live north of the Oxus is also stated in the *Han shu*.

According to Chang-Ch'ien, "the Great Yüeh-chih, moving westward from Ta-yuan, struck at Ta-hia and conquered this country".[5] Ta-hia had a population of over a million; there "they have no supreme head, but nearly every town appoints its own ruler". The Great Yüeh-chih regarded Ta-hia (Bactria) as a country subject to them, but this dependence was, judging by the description given, only nominal. While recognizing the supremacy of the Great Yüeh-chih, who remained in Transoxiana, Bactria still retained its independence (Chang-Ch'ien went there as to another country), and normal life went on without any obvious effects of "nomad invasions": there were cities and settlements of permanent inhabitants, surrounded by walls; in the capital there was a market with a great variety of goods; trade flourished, including international trade (merchants from Bactria travelled on

[1] *Han shu* ch. 61. [On Ta-yuan and the Chinese expedition cf. pp. 540ff.]
[2] *Shih-chi* 123. 3b. [3] *Shih-chi* 123. 3b. [4] *Shih-chi* 123. 2a.
[5] *Shih-chi* 123, 5b.

business to India). This situation probably continued into the 1st century B.C., if we accept the account given in the *Han shu.*

Chang-Ch'ien's preponderant interest in the nomad countries, especially the larger ones, is easily understood: he had been sent to find allies for China against the Hsiung-nu. He speaks of a settled agricultural population only in connection with Ta-yuan; but this does not mean that there were no permanent settlements in other parts of Transoxiana. Archaeological data can supplement the picture drawn by Chang-Ch'ien.

In the second half of the 1st millennium B.C., small irrigated oases (along irrigation canals ten to fifteen kilometres in length), with a population engaged in agriculture, formed sporadic islets in uncultivated territory. During Alexander's entire journey from the Oxus to Maracanda he came upon not a single settlement. In Sogdiana, as in Bactria, only irrigated oases were fertile, "but a large part of this territory consists of uninhabited desert; owing to its aridity these cheerless regions are without inhabitants and produce nothing".[1] Large settlements provided with walls (the site at Afrāsiyāb = Maracanda, and the Kyuzeli-gyr site in Chorasmia), apparently lacked continuous built-up areas and were (like the "cliffs" mentioned in connection with Alexander's campaigns) places of refuge for the whole population of an oasis (comparable to the *refugia* of the European "barbarians") rather than towns. Only about the beginning of the Christian era and in the first centuries of it do archaeological data give evidence of the appearance of trunk-canals of great length for irrigation purposes, and the rise of urban life in the full sense of the word.

Transoxiana's acquaintance with money began in the 3rd century B.C., when Seleucid coins found their way there, as foreign currency. At the end of the 3rd or at the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. the first locally produced "barbarous imitations" were issued in Sughd. At present we can speak with assurance of only two "lines" of local imitations of Seleucid coins.

For one of these (pl. 19 (1, 2)) the prototype was provided by Seleucid drachms of the Alexander type (with, on the obverse side, the head of Herakles = Alexander, facing right, and on the reverse side a seated figure of Zeus, bearing an eagle, facing left). This group of imitations is known to us only from a very small number of specimens, and cannot be assigned a location with any precision.

[1] Quintus Curtius Rufus, VII, n. 27.

The other group (pl. 19 (4–11)) was issued in the valley of the river Zarafshān (on the middle reaches) and took as its prototype the drachms of Antiochus I (obverse, a king's head facing right; reverse, a horse's head facing right). The numerous series of coins that make up this group illustrate various stages of departure from the original prototype, which testifies to the long period during which they were being struck. If we take as the date of their first issue the end of the 3rd century B.C., then the making of these imitations went on for not less than two centuries: to the final series of imitations of drachms of Antiochus I are directly related the earliest coins of Hyrcodes (pl. 19 (13) – a "hybrid" specimen), and also the early series of Sogdian coins with a representation of an archer (pl. 19 (12) and pl. 21 (1–11)).

Apparently, the link between these imitations and the name of Antiochus was retained in oral tradition (most probably through the names used for the coins), since on one of the very last series (pl. 19 (11)) there is an attempt to render in Aramaic characters the name of Antiochus (*'ntwh*), and the earliest coins showing an archer (the initial pattern for these was obviously not made by a local craftsman – pl. 21 (2)) "trace themselves back" to Antiochus' strikings by virtue of the Greek legend on the reverse side (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ).

At roughly this time there began in the western part of the valley of the river Zarafshān (the Bukhārā oasis) the issuing of imitations of the tetradrachms of the Greco-Bactrian king Euthydemus – at first (2nd century and part of 1st century B.C.) only with the distorted Greek legend (pl. 20 (1–4)).

To the north of Sughd – in Chorasmia or along the middle reaches of the Jaxartes – must have been the location of an imitation of a tetradrachm of another Greco-Bactrian king, Eucratides, which can be approximately dated as 2nd–1st centuries B.C.: the earliest Chorasmian coins go back to this.

Imitations of the obols of Eucratides (with the king wearing a helmet on the obverse side), belonging to the time between the last decades of the 2nd century B.C. and the end of the 1st century A.D. (pl. 21 (12)), are located very narrowly in southern Tajikistan (the burial-ground of Tup-khon, near Ḥiṣār, the Tuikhar burial-ground in the Bishkent valley, both of these points being in the basin of the river Kāfirnihān). In the same territory (but, apparently, from the middle of the 1st century B.C.) and in districts of southern Uzbekistan there circulated (and were probably issued) copper imitations of tetradrachms and drachms of

Heliocles (pl. 22), finds of which have also been made to the south of the Oxus; the issuing of these imitations in copper preceded their being struck from silver (end of the 2nd, middle of the 1st century B.C.), but it is difficult to establish where this took place, since the only documented find that has been made of them is the Qunduz hoard, at the Khisht-tepe site in northern Afghanistan. Determination of the initial habitat of the imitations of Heliocles' coins is also made difficult by the fact that they continued in circulation right down to the Kushān period, and inclusive, judging by the archaeological stratigraphy of the finds made of them, and the other coins found along with them. It is most probable that their initial habitat covered only the districts of southern Uzbekistan (from there have come the majority of the specimens belonging to the earliest series of these imitations) and only later (with the cessation of the issuing of imitations of obols of Eucratides) did it extend to include also parts of southern Tajikistan.

Thus, both the written sources and the numismatic data show that Transoxiana in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. lacked internal political unity. Even Sughd (the basin of the river Zarafshān) was divided between at least two realms, this corresponding more or less to the later partition of the Zarafshān valley into "Bukharan Sughd" and "Samarkandian Sughd"; accordingly we have imitations of tetradrachms of Euthydemus and imitations of drachms of Antiochus I, with a horse's head on the reverse side. Imitations of the tetradrachms of Eucratides can be assigned to K'ang-Kiu or to Chorasmia, although this location is still hypothetical. The imitations of coins of Heliocles are defined with confidence as Yüeh-chih strikings, but it is still unclear whether they were struck for the whole Yüeh-chih domain or for only one of the five Yüeh-chih realms (*hsi-hou*) of which we learn from the *Han shu* (Hsiu-mi, with the city of Hsiu-mi; Shuang-mi with the city of Shuang-mi; Kwei-shwang, with the city of Hu-tsao; Hsi-tun, with the city of Po-mo; Kao-fu with the city of Kao-fu – *Han shu* 96A, 14b). The latter is more probable, since the area of circulation of the imitations of the coins of Heliocles is much smaller than the territory occupied by the Great Yüeh-chih, to judge by the descriptions given in the Chinese sources. If this is so, the "displacement" of the imitations of the obols of Eucratides from the valley of the Kāfirnihān and their replacement by imitations of the coins of Heliocles might be connected with the struggle of the Kwei-shwang (Kushān) tribe of the Yue-chi for supremacy over the other four tribes within the tribal union, and

the imitations of the coins of Heliocles could be seen as being struck by the Yüeh-chih tribe of Kwei-shwang, whereas the imitations of the obols of Eucratides were minted by the tribe (or realm) of Shuang-mi, lying to the east of Kwei-shwang.

III

The Great Yüeh-chih were undoubtedly the dominant political power in a considerable area of Transoxiana in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. Connected with them also was a political event of crucial significance for the whole of the Middle East – the rise of the Kushān kingdom as a result of the elevation of the Yue-chi tribe of Kwei-shwang and their subjection of the other four tribes. Although the problem of the precise chronology of the Kushāns remains unsettled, we do possess a few reliable dates closely related to political history for the first centuries A.D.

Of particular importance for the history of Transoxiana is the date of the migration of the Great Yüeh-chih southward, across the Oxus. The information given in the *Han shu*, mentioned above, enables us to estimate that neither the crossing over by the Great Yüeh-chih to the left bank of the Oxus nor the creation of the Kushān kingdom can have occurred before 25 A.D., though we do not know how much later it was that they occurred. The chronological limit after which the continued existence of the Kushān kingdom is out of the question is defined by two events of the seventies and eighties of the 4th century: in the western part of the Kushān kingdom Sasanian governors (belonging to the royal dynasty) were at that time minting coins on which they described themselves as Kūshān-shāh, and the southern and eastern parts of the Kushān kingdom were then being conquered by Chandragupta II, who brought them within the bounds of the Gupta state. From inscriptions we know that the reigns of all the Kushān kings lasted all together about two centuries. Regardless of how the "burning question" of the date of Kanishka may be solved, it is clear that somewhere between 25 A.D. and the seventies or eighties of the 4th century there took place the two-hundred-year history of the Kushān kingdom.[1]

In the 1st – or, if we accept the later variants of Kanishka's date, the 2nd – century A.D. Kujula Kadphises (Kieu-tsieu-kio), having united the Great Yüeh-chih under his authority, established far to the south of

[1] See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the Kushān dates. Ed.

the Oxus the territorial nucleus of the Kushān kingdom. But his link with Transoxiana was apparently broken at this time. The abundant copper coinage of Kujula Kadphises, represented by numerous finds made within his dominions (in Taxila alone more than two thousand coins of his were found), is completely absent north of the Oxus; only a few specimens from Tirmidh are known. Later, judging by finds of coins of Vima Kadphises or Kanishka I, there took place a partial *reconquista* by the Kushāns in Transoxiana. However, the Kushān dominions extended no farther than the Ḥiṣār range. In the basins of the Vakhsh, the Surkhān Daryā and the Kāfirnihān, and in the Ḥiṣār valley, finds of coins of Vima Kadphises, Kanishka I, Huvishka (encountered most rarely of all), Vasudeva and Kanishka III are numbered in hundreds. They are also known on the right bank of the middle reaches of the Oxus (as far as the Turkmenistan S.S.R., inclusive).

This same period saw the extensive opening up by irrigation of the valleys of southern Tajikistan, and apparently of southern Uzbekistan as well, to settlement by a permanent population engaged in agriculture: large trunk canals, up to a hundred kilometres in length, were dug, and the inhabitants of the smaller valleys and the foothills migrated to these newly irrigated lands. We have information from inscriptions (and, in particular, from the great Surkh Kotal inscription of Nokonzok) of the irrigation works carried out by the Kushān administration in other regions of this extensive state. For Transoxiana we have, apart from the purely archaeological data and finds of coins, only one piece of indirect evidence that such works for the establishment of large trunk canals were carried out there as well by the Kushān administration. In the Vakhsh valley (to the north-east of the Urta-boz heights) there has come down to our own day the place-name Karalang (attached to a large natural boundary and an old offshoot, neglected since the 12th century, of the trunk-canal), which is probably derived from the Bactrian *καραλ-ραγγο* "head of the frontier region" (which is also the title given to Nokonzok in the great Surkh Kotal inscription).

The question of the administrative structure of the Kushān dominions in Transoxiana (as generally of the administrative structure of the Kushān kingdom) remains as yet unanswered. It would seem that not only the peripheral but also the central parts of the Kushān kingdom were divided among rulers with the rank of satrap, or sovereigns subordinate to the Kushān "king of kings". It is not impossible that some of these rulers may have obtained the right to strike silver coins,

the striking of gold coins being reserved to the "king of kings". This possibility is suggested, in particular, by the existence of silver coins of Zeionises (Jihunik), a contemporary and satrap of Vima Kadphises. If we accept the hypothesis of such an administrative structure, then one of the Kushān governors in Transoxiana may have been Sanab (pl. 21 (14–16)): his name on coins is usually read as "Heraeus" or "Miaios", but if we take account only of the early, undistorted spellings of the Greek legend, it is more likely that this word is not the ruler's name but the Aramaic ideogram *MR'Y* "sovereign" in Greek characters). The palace at Khalchayan (near the town of Denau, in the valley of the river Surkhān Daryā), which was excavated by G. A. Pugachenkova, could, if we were to assume it to be somewhat younger, be seen as the remains of the residence of one of the Kushān governors in Transoxiana.

Apparently there had already taken definitive form and become profoundly marked, so early as the Kushān period, the historico-cultural demarcation between the areas of southern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan (the future north Tukhāristān) and the other parts of Transoxiana. In any case, only the southernmost districts of Transoxiana were under the rule of the Kushān kings. North of the Ḥiṣār range, finds of Kushān coins are encountered extremely rarely (a few specimens from the basin of the river Zarafshān), and neither Sughd nor Chāch nor the other principal regions of Transoxiana show traces of any extension of Kushān political power to include them.

Also to be decided negatively is the question of the inclusion of Chorasmia in the Kushān kingdom, although this suggestion was put forward after the finds of Kushān coins in the lower reaches of the Oxus; over a hundred specimens were found, from the reigns of Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva, coins of the last-mentioned being markedly predominant. These finds cannot, however, be used to define political frontiers, since many of the Kushān coins from Chorasmia are marked with an S, a graphic countermark which is well known, though in the form of a tamgha, on Chorasmian coins (on silver ones of the 3rd and 4th centuries, and on copper ones struck not earlier than the 4th century). Through this mark the Kushān coins are transformed from the "foreign" into the local category.

IV

Still more definite evidence of the political independence of most parts of Transoxiana in the Kushān period is provided by the independent local strikings found there. In most cases they go back, without perceptible breaks, to those "barbarous imitations" which earlier (in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.) were issued and circulated in the same regions. Apart from coins we have practically no sources from which to reconstruct the internal political life of Transoxiana.

Between the 2nd and 5th centuries the relative importance of the settled population in the economic life of Transoxiana increases markedly, and the nomads lose their former rôle as the dominant political force. Along with this the previous large territorial unions break up and the territorial–political division of the country becomes more fragmented. It would seem that, in order to understand the processes taking place in that period in the society of Transoxiana, one needs to remember the great trunk-canals that were laid out in approximately this period, and the populating of the newly irrigated lands by migrants from the small oases of the foothill zone. People living along the great trunk-canal not only jointly used its water and kept it clean and in repair; from the social standpoint they formed a close and stable community, whose economic cohesion was eventually given political form. This process found its fullest expression in the 7th and early 8th centuries, when the entire territory of Transoxiana, occupied by settled agricultural inhabitants, was divided into small oasis-states. In the Kushān period, too, the political map of Transoxiana that can be compiled from numismatic data shews a rather fragmented realm.

We can therefore say with confidence that in the 3rd–5th centuries, Chorasmia was divided into "left-bank" and "right-bank" realms. In the same period the basin of the Zarafshān was divided not only into "Bukharan Sughd" and "Samarkandian Sughd" but also into several different realms, each of which struck its own coins. The numismatic habitats cannot always be correlated with the information given in the Chinese dynastic chronicles (*Bei-shi*, *Sui-shu*), but in general the contours are becoming more and more definite as coin material is being accumulated.

In Samarkandian Sughd in the 1st or 2nd century A.D. there began the issuing of coins that showed, on the reverse side, a standing archer (pl. 21 (1–11)). The time during which they were struck can be divided

into four periods. The first of these (pl. 21 (1–5)) is the time of the coins of Ashtam (early Sogdian legend *'št'm* on the obverse side), the primary pattern for which was made by an obviously non-local craftsman and included on the reverse side the Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ. Later, with the making of new dies by local engravers, the Greek legend quickly became (as with the "barbarous imitations") distorted and ornamental. Directly parallel to the "barbarous imitations", too, was the reduction of the coins with the archer from the Attic standard of about 4 grammes to 1–1.5 grammes, as early as the first of the periods, and later in the third period – rapidly and regardless of any metrological norms – there was a further fall in weight to 0.2–0.3 grammes. Any further reduction of these "drachms" was simply impossible, and during the fourth period their weight remained roughly the same; but there was a worsening of the silver content.

Thus, the archer coins (like many other Transoxianan coins of this period) show signs characteristic of "barbarous imitations" and of coins with a conventional (non-value) rate of exchange. The archer coins of the second period (the Sogdian legend on the obverse, *βγωrty* – pl. 21 (6); *hprwnh* – pl. 21 (7–9)) retain the former compositional scheme, but the representations themselves have departed considerably from the initial pattern. During the third period (on the obverse, *kyδr* – pl. 21 (10)) the stylizing of the representations is even more marked, leading to almost complete disintegration in the coins of the fourth period (plate III, 13–16): in the specimens that have come down to us there are only illegible vestiges of what was apparently a cursive legend.

It is roughly possible to date the archer coins by periods. Coins of the second period (closed writing of the letter *vāv*, not yet shown in the Sogdian "Ancient Letters") must be dated not earlier than the 4th century; those of the third period (appearance of ligatures in the writing) can be assigned to the 5th century; and those of the fourth period are dated, from archaeological stratigraphy (the Penjikent site), as belonging to the late 5th or early 6th century.

Since the archer coins bear no titles (if we do not include the Greek legend, rapidly subjected to ornamentation), and one and the same legend remains on coins struck over a period of a hundred years and more, it is clear that these coins did not bear the personal, nominal mark of the rulers of Samarkandian Sughd between the 1st and 2nd centuries and the 6th century and the first half of the 7th.

The so-called coins of Hyrcodes (pl. 19 (13–25)) are in many ways parallel with the archer coins. Their location in the south-western part of Sughd is beyond doubt (the main area of the finds is the south-western part of the Bukhārā oasis and the district of Āmul), but this needs to be narrowed down more precisely. It is necessary to distinguish between two branches of the coins bearing the name of Hyrcodes (the Greek legend ΥΡΚΩΔΟΥ on the obverse side), the difference lying in what appears on the reverse side (a standing divinity with a flame rising from his shoulder and the legend ΑΡΔΗΘΡΟΥ ΜΑ ΚΑΡΟΥ; a protome of a prancing horse and the legend ΥΡΚΩΔΟΥ. These coins altered approximately in the same way as the archer coins (beginning of distortion of the legend, pl. 19 (14, 20); the signs making up the illegible legend are merely reminiscent of letters of the Greek alphabet – pl. 19 (15, 21). But attempts to replace the Greek legend which had lost its meaning by a new, Sogdian legend (pl. 19 (22)... *MR'Y*...?; pl. 19 (16–18) – *'nt'wyyw'ʒn*, as W. B. Henning read it) were accompanied by substantial changes in the iconography of the obverse side and were apparently connected with the appearance in the mint of new die-engravers. The whole subsequent minting (pl. 19 (23–25)) is anepigraphic and constitutes a consecutive series in which the "disintegration" of the representations is fully completed. Parallel with these changes in the representations and the legend goes a gradual reduction in weight and, in the final phase, a sharp deterioration in the silver content.

Like the archer coins, the coins of Hyrcodes are essentially an anonymous minting that shows neither the ruler's name nor his titles.

In Sughd (in the southern or south-western part) yet another group of early Sogdian coins was issued (pl. 19 (3)), derived from imitations of early Seleucid drachms of the Alexander type (through the reverse side, where Zeus bearing an eagle is depicted in a very stylized way). Unlike the archer coins and the coins of Hyrcodes, on these coins the Sogdian legend (obverse *'ywδw yn*; reverse *MR'Y*) includes the title "ruler", rendered by means of an Aramaic ideogram. These coins, less than a score of which are known, can be dated only broadly – some time between the 2nd and 4th centuries.

In the Bukhārā area coins were still being struck in this period on the pattern of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus. In the 1st century B.C. or the 1st century A.D., however, along with the spoiled Greek legend there appears first the tamgha (pl. 20 (5)), and then also an early

Sogdian legend, i.e., a change takes place from a purely imitative striking to a Sogdian striking in accordance with the type of the tetradrachm of Euthydemus.

Only the earliest legend on these coins (*myrδat* – pl. 20 (6)) is unaccompanied by a title. On the unique coin in the British Museum, Henning proposed to read *kβčt MLK'*, but it is not impossible that the second word is *MR'(Y)*. The title *MR'Y* is found, in any case, on all the other coins of this group (it can be read with certainty also where Henning saw *MLK' twhr*) in combination with yet another word, the reading of which remains unclear (it is hardly likely to be a personal name: more probably a place-name or another title). In the process of reproducing one and the same legend over about four centuries this legend underwent stylization (but with a stable and quite intelligible way of writing). In other words, for the Sogdian legend on these coins there was developed a special kind of *ductus* which is not found on any other written memorials. This accounts for the special difficulty experienced in reading it.

In the minting of Sogdian coins of the type of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus we can distinguish two main periods (with a more detailed chronological subdivision within each of these). The first period must be dated from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. (a ruler wearing a diadem – pl. 20 (5–9)) and the second (a ruler wearing a "tiara" – pl. 20 (10–12)) from the 2nd to the 4th century.

Despite the instability in the weight of the Sogdian coins of the type of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus, complete reduction did not take place. But their rate of exchange was conventional: the concealed reduction (worsening of the silver content) shows this to have been so.

In the second half of the 4th century (or at the end of it) the issue of Sogdian coins of the type of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus suddenly stops, and they are replaced by coins with a quite different appearance (pl. 24 (5, 6)): small silver coins with a head-and-shoulders representation of a ruler in a diadem on the obverse (on the whole, iconographically in the Transoxianan tradition), and on the reverse an altar with a blazing fire and a circular legend in Sogdian, in which only the title *MR'Y* can be read. In this same period, copper coins with the same type of obverse were being struck (pl. 24 (7, 8)) but which had on the reverse a man's face on a sacrificial altar. Both of these series are ancestors of a new and lengthy "numismatic dynasty" of Bukharan copper coins (pl. 24 (9–15)), the issue of which went on until the 7th century. The

5th and 6th centuries also saw the appearance of other series of coins in the Bukhārā oasis (often anepigraphic) which it is at present difficult to correlate with specific states and sovereigns.

Bukharan silver strikings of the type of the drachms of Bahrām V (the legend is read by V. A. Livshits as *pwx'r xwb k'w*) seem to show a transition to circulation on a value basis, and, as regards internal politics, to the formation of a hierarchical structure of rulers of different ranks in the Bukhārā oasis.

Similar processes took place in the 5th and 6th centuries in other parts of Transoxiana as well. The development and spread of new social forms were accompanied by the appearance of new centres for the minting of coins, new series of coins, and a generally much more intricate situation as regards the circulation of money in Transoxiana in this period. Precise location has been suggested by S. K. Kabanov for groups of copper coins with a representation on the reverse side of a king cleaving a lion with his sword (pl. 24 (18); Livshits reads the Sogdian legend as *kyšykw k'w* "King of Kish"?). All the finds of these coins are connected with the Kashka Daryā oasis. A few large numismatic groups, however, have as yet not been given a well-founded geographical attribution (pl. 24 (16, 17, 19)).

The first steps in independent striking of coins in Chorasmia were taken in the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. Here we can trace how gradually a transition occurred from purely imitative issues to independent ones. First (pl. 23 (1)), on the imitations of tetradrachms of the Greco-Bactrian king Eucratides (a king wearing a helmet/charging Dioscuri) there appeared only the tamgha [tamgha symbol], which has been given the name "Chorasmian" (although a very close variant is found on Sogdian coins of the type of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus – pl. 20 (5)): with a few modifications, this is a feature of all the subsequent Chorasmian strikings.

Later, the iconography is changed, first on the obverse and later on the reverse (pl. 23 (2, 3)): instead of the two charging Dioscuri, a horseman is shown, facing right. The horseman, like the tamgha, is characteristic of the majority of the Chorasmian silver coins, and some of the copper ones, down to the middle of the 8th century.

Then there appear on the reverse side (at first along with the vestiges of the distorted Greek legend) Chorasmian legends (in a local variation of the Aramaic script), containing as a rule the name and title of a king (*wrtrmwš MLK'* – pl. 23 (3); *wzm'r MLK'* – pl. 23 (4); *s'nβry*

MLK' – pl. 23 (6) etc.). Early Chorasmian silver strikings are known from a very small number of specimens, but a copper coin was issued at the same time, the reverse side of which was often completely occupied by the tamgha (copper coins of King Vazamar – pl. 23 (5)). Later, during the 5th and part of the 6th centuries, silver was not minted in Chorasmia, while copper coins continued to be issued.

When the issuing of silver coins was resumed, in the 7th century, the appearance of the coins was different: on the thin, flat disc, representations were executed in very low relief, and the style of the representations was changed. In that period, apparently, in Chorasmia as in Bukhārā, a transition took place from a conventional to a value-based circulation of silver coins.

Simultaneously with the resumption of silver minting, the titles given in the legend were altered – the dual title *MR'Y MLK'* "sovereign (and) king" is shown, plus the name of the ruler (*MR'Y MLK' šr'm* – pl. 24 (11); *MR'Y MLK' k'nyk* – pl. 24 (12); *MR'Y MLK' wzk'nčwr* (I)– pl. 24 (13); *MR'Y MLK' xwsrw* – pl. 24 (14); *MR'Y MLK' sy'wršprn* and also a name in the Sogdian legend on the obverse side – pl. 24 (4)).

Comparison of the numismatic data with the information given by Bīrūnī (and, in particular, with his list of twenty-two kings who reigned over Chorasmia between 304 and 994 A.D.) results in coincidence only in a few names for the 8th century (Shāvashfar, Azkājuvār) and in two cases for earlier kings (*'rθmwx* in Bīrūnī, *wrtrmwš* on coins; *š'wš* and *sy'wršprn*). Just as unreliable, as Livshits has recently shown, are Bīrūnī's statements about "the era of Āfrīgh": comparison of Chorasmian inscriptions dated in accordance with the local era (documents from Toprak-kala with the dates 188, 204, 207 and 231; inscriptions on silver vessels with dates 570, 700, 703?, 714; inscriptions on ossuaries from Tok-kala with dates between 658 and 738) with objects and strata dated independently of the inscriptions show that the era used in these inscriptions can begin not later than the first decades of the 2nd century A.D., but certainly not in 304 A.D. The "era of Āfrīgh" of which Bīrūnī wrote, if it existed at all, was not the official era used throughout Chorasmia.

The dual title "sovereign (and) king" on Chorasmian silver coins of the 7th and 8th centuries presupposes the presence in Chorasmia of several sovereigns (*MR'Y* = *xwtw*), each possessing a certain degree of independence but subordinate to a king (*Khwārazmshāh* with the title *MLK'*) who was himself one of these sovereigns. The existence of

such "ducal" sovereigns in Chorasmia is attested by their coins. B. I. Vainberg considers that the "sovereign (and) king" Khusrau (down to 712) ruled only over the Kerder oasis, although, judging by the title on the coins, he regarded himself as being king of all Chorasmia.

A similar internal political structure is particularly clearly traceable for Samarkandian Sughd in the second half of the 7th century and the first half of the 8th, that is, for the period when the cast copper coins of the Chinese pattern were issued here (usually with on one side the tamgha and on the other a Sogdian legend with the name and title of the ruler), to which O. I. Smirnova has devoted almost forty years' study.

The supreme ruler of Samarkandian Sughd bore the title "king" (*MLK'* on coins and in documents, the ideogram for Sogdian *γšyδ* = *ikhshīd*): *c.* 642 – Shīshpīr (*šyšpyr MLK'*), *c.* 650–5 – Varkhūmān (*βrywm'n MLK'*), 696–8 – Tūkāspādāk (*twk'sp'δ'k MLK'*), *c.* 700–9 – Tarkhūn (*trywn MLK'*), 712–38 – Ghūrak (*'wy'rk MLK'*). This list could be extended (or, more precisely, supplemented) with a few more names which are known to us either solely from coins or else solely from written sources.

Although the royal title could pass from father to son (in particular, one of the points in the treaty of 712 between Ghūrak and the Arabs guarantees recognition by the latter of Ghūrak's son as his successor), in the Chinese sources we much more often find statements that such and such an *ikhshīd* was "installed by the people", "chosen by the nobles", etc.

The other title found in different forms in the sources is that of "sovereign" (on coins, as a rule, *MR'Y*; in documents it is met with, spelt out in Sogdian, as *γwt'w* or *γwβ*). One of the *khvatāv*s was also supreme king – his full title was "king of Sughd, sovereign of Samarkand" (*sywdy'nk MLK' sm'rkndč MR'Y*). From coins we know best the "dynasty" of sovereigns of Penjikent. Judging by the documents from the Mount Mugh archive, the sovereign of Penjikent (Panch) was Dīvāshtīch, but we have no knowledge of Penjikent coins with his name or of his coins for all Sughd; for at least two years, and apparently at the same time as Ghūrak, Dīvāshtīch called himself "king of Sughd, sovereign of Samarkand".

The general picture of the internal political life of Samarkandian Sughd, of Chorasmia and of other parts of Transoxiana is somewhat complicated by the disturbing circumstance of the struggle against the Arabs between the end of the 7th century and the first quarter of the

8th, but it would seem that our attention should at present be concentrated on the fundamental phenomena and processes, since in any case we are unable with our present sources to reconstruct in detail the concrete changes in the internal political history of Transoxiana between the 3rd and 7th centuries.

About the 3rd and 4th centuries the political map of Transoxiana becomes more fragmented than in the age of the "barbarous imitations". Northern Tukhāristān (the basin of the right bank of the Oxus) is finally separated from the other parts of Transoxiana, first under the rule of the Kushān kings and then under the Sasanian governors in the districts conquered from the Kushān kingdom. The habitat of Kushāno-Sasanian coins in Transoxiana is now defined fairly sharply: they are known along the whole of the right bank of the Oxus as far as Chahār Jū, are encountered in the Bukhārā oasis (Paikand) and are especially numerous in the valleys of the Surkhān Daryā, Kāfirnihān, Qïzïl Ṣū and Vakhsh, and in the Ḥiṣār valley. Further north and deeper into Transoxiana, however, absolutely no Kushāno-Sasanian coins are found.

Bukharan Sughd was, down to the second half of the 4th century, almost entirely under the rule of sovereigns who issued coins of the type of the tetradrachms of Euthydemus. But the southern and south-western parts of Transoxiana did not belong to them: the "dynasty of Hyrcodes" (or rather the two "dynasties", but it is not clear how they were divided territorially), struck their own money, and other independent Sogdian realms existed (to one of them belong the coins with a seated figure of Zeus on the reverse). Down to the 6th century, or the first half of the 7th, the single line of tradition is not broken in Samarkandian Sughd, which seems to have been formed early on into a politically united whole.

Chorasmia in the first centuries of the Christian era seems more "advanced" socially and politically. Its ruler assumed the title of "king" before any of the other dynasties of Transoxiana. Almost nothing is known of the internal political life of the northern borderlands of Transoxiana down to the 6th and 7th centuries; there a settled agricultural population seems to have begun somewhat later to set about constructing large trunk-canals. The closer vicinity of the nomad political groupings provides only a partial explanation of the social and political backwardness of Chāch, Farghāna and other areas lying to the north of the rest of Transoxiana.

The rulers of small oases, separated from each other economically

and politically, were unable to offer serious resistance if Transoxiana were invaded. The mention of "Kish, Sughd, and the mountains of Chāch" as forming one of the boundaries up to which Īrānshahr extended, in Shāpūr I's inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht (262) may be evidence of a campaign by Shāpūr I across the Oxus. Possessing as we do no more detailed sources for, or material traces of, Shāpūr I's visit to Transoxiana, the itinerary of his army can be reconstructed only in a purely speculative way – from Marv over the river-crossing at Āmul (Chahār Jū) to Paikand, a distance of twelve farsakhs (thirty-six miles) across a sand desert, and then another five farsakhs to Bukhārā; if "the mountains of Chāch", i.e. the mountains on the border of Chāch, means the Nura-tau ridge, then Shāpūr I may have got as far as the middle reaches of the river Zarafshān (Samarkand and its environs), and Kish would then have lain on his way back to the Oxus and Balkh.

However, none of the realms of Transoxiana was included in Shāpūr I's *dastkart* "Res Gestae". There is no mention, either, of the Iranian sovereigns ruling over these realms through vassals belonging to local dynasties, and the coins minted here by the local rulers provide no foundation for such a supposition. Influence of Sasanian coin iconography on the coins of the Bukhārā oasis is noticeable from the last decades of the 4th century onward, when the reverse side of the local coins begin to show a representation of an altar (on the copper coins a man's face appears on the altar), borrowed either from the Kushāno-Sasanian coins or from those of Shāpūr II (pl. 31 (1–5)). Later, the drachms of Bahrām V (or imitations of these in the Hephthalite period) served as prototype for the so-called "Bukhārkhudāt" coins; this line was continued, in the form of the "gitrifi" dirhams, in the mintings of Transoxiana right down to the 11th century.

The influence of Sasanian Iran was also noticeable in Chorasmia. In the reign of King Vazamar it was shown in the iconography of the obverse of the silver coins (the shape of the crown and other details) and also in the composition of the design of the copper coins. It is not impossible that it was under Sasanian influence that the royal titles assumed the form they did in Chorasmia.

The complicated relations (very confusedly depicted in the sources) between Sasanian Iran and its eastern neighbours in the 5th and 6th centuries do not seem to have had any direct effect on the countries of Transoxiana: the struggle was fought out further south, in Tukhāristān

(Ṭāliqān, Balkh). There is no reflection of these relations in the coins of Transoxiana in this period – nor do they reflect the conquest of Sughd by the Hephthalites (509).

Only in the 7th century, it seems, was the internal political structure of the countries of Transoxiana finally constituted – a system of petty independent sovereigns recognizing the paramountcy of a king who also has his own territory and is, essentially, a "sovereign of sovereigns". In this period we can again observe comparatively large countries on the political map of the region – Bukhāran Sughd, Samarkandian Sughd, Chorasmia, northern Tukhāristān, Chāch, Farghāna – the political cohesion of these countries being apparently of varying extent.

It may be that this process was somewhat accelerated by Transoxiana's external political conflicts in the 7th century, first with China (in the western regions there was even carried out in 650–5 a reorganization of the Chinese administrative divisions, and the *wang* of Kang, Fu-hu-man (i.e. the *ikhshīd* Varkhūmān) was "appointed" governor-general of Sughd), and then with the Arabs, whose first contacts with Transoxiana took the form of raids. Even after the victorious raid by Qutaiba b. Muslim in 712, when he carried "fire and sword" throughout the region, Transoxiana could not be regarded as having been finally conquered. In 718–19, three rulers from Transoxiana – the *ikhshīd* of Sughd, Ghūrak, the king of Bukhārā, Tughshāda, and the sovereign of Kumedh, Narayana – sent messages to the T'ang emperor Hsüan Tsung asking for help against the Arabs: help that was not forthcoming. In order to subject Transoxiana completely, the Arabs had to resort to diplomacy and make use of the divisions and mutual hostility between the local sovereigns.

To appreciate the situation in Transoxiana, we may refer to the fate of a noble magnate of Sughd, Dīvāshtīch, sovereign of Panjikent, who, for a period of not less than two years (parallel, apparently, with Ghūrak) called himself "king of Sughd, sovereign of Samarkand". Thanks to Dīvāshtīch's archives, from his fortress on Mount Mugh we now know how complex and ambiguous his position was. On the one hand he was in correspondence with al-Jarrāḥ, governor of Khurāsān, calling himself the latter's client (*maulā*), and with 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣubḥ, from whom he received instructions. He looked after the sons of the *ikhshīd* Tarkhūn, who had been removed by the Sogdians for submissiveness to the Arabs, and most probably received his title of "king of Sughd, sovereign of Samarkand" from the hands of the Arabs.

On the other hand, however, he sent a confidential agent to the *khvatāv* of Chāch, the khāqān of the Turks and the king of Farghāna, and carried on some sort of negotiations with them behind the backs of the Arabs. In 722 he first took refuge from the Arabs in Penjikent, and then fled to the mountains, to a remote fortress. The troop that pursued him was led by al-Musayyib b. Bishr al-Riyāḥī, but along with him were also the Transoxianan sovereigns – the Khwārazmshāh Shaukar, son of Khamīk, and Ghūram, sovereign of Akharūn and Shūmān (in the Ḥiṣār valley). On the orders of Sa'īd al-Ḥarashī, governor of Khurāsān, Dīvāshtīch was later crucified on a *nā'ūs* (tumulus).[1]

The sovereigns of Transoxiana still retained some independence (including the right to issue their own currency) down to the middle of the 8th century, and the final conquest of the region by the Arabs took place only in the last quarter of that century.

[1] [On the penetration of the Sogdians further east into Eastern Turkistan, Mongolia and China see ch. 7, pp. 270ff. On trade with China and the Sogdians as merchants, see ch. 13, pp. 551ff. On Sogdian cultural achievements, their religious activities, and their relations with the Turkic nations of Central Asia, see ch. 17, pp. 615ff. On the development of the arts in Transoxiana see ch. 30. On the languages, scripts and literatures of the region, see Section VIII.]

APPENDIX

KEY TO PLATES 19–24

Thanks are due to the authorities of the following museums for permission to illustrate coins in their collections:

Moscow – State Historical Museum.
Leningrad – State Hermitage Museum.
Samarkand – Museum of History of Arts and Culture of Uzbekistan.
Termez – Historical Museum.
Tashkent – Museum of the History of Uzbekistan.

Plate 19

EARLY SOGDIAN COINS

1–2. Central Asian imitations of Alexander drachms or of early Seleucid drachms with similar types. Locality uncertain. 2nd–1st century B.C.
3. Early Sogdian coin, derived from nos 1–2. Southern Sughd (?). 1st–4th century A.D.
4–11. Early Sogdian imitations of the drachs of Antiochus I. Samarkandian Sughd. Late 3rd century B.C.–1st century A.D.
12. Early Sogdian coin of Ashtam; reverse type derived from nos 4–11. Samarkandian Sughd. 2nd century A.D.
13–18. Coins of Hyrcodes; reverse, protome of prancing horse. Locality uncertain (south-western Sughd?) 1st–4th century A.D.
19–25. Coins of Hyrcodes; reverse, standing male deity. Western Sughd (Bukhārā). 1st–6th century A.D.

15, 23–5 debased silver or bronze; the rest silver.
4–8, 10, 12 Samarkand; the rest Leningrad.

Plate 20

EARLY SOGDIAN IMITATIONS OF EUTHYDEMUS TETRADRACHMS. WESTERN SUGHD (BUKHĀRĀ)

1–4. With corrupt Greek legends. 2nd century B.C.
5. With corrupt legends and *tamgha*. Early 1st century B.C.
6–9. With early Sogdian legends. 1st century B.C.–1st century A.D.
10–12. With early Sogdian legends on reverse; head in *tiara* on obverse. 2nd–4th century A.D.

1–12 debased silver or plated silver.
2 Tashkent; the rest Leningrad.

Plate 21

1–11. Early Sogdian coins with archer type. Samarkandian Sughd. 1st–early 6th century A.D.
1–5. First period, with name *'št'm* on obverse; Greek legend or imitation Greek legend on reverse.
6–9. Second period, with name *βγwrty* (6), *hprwrnh* (7–9).
10. Third period, with name *kyδr*.
11. Fourth period, with uncertain legend.

5 bronze; the rest silver.

12. Imitation of the obols of Eucratides. Silver. Southern Tajikistan. Late 2nd century B.C.–late 1st century A.D.
13. Coin of Spadbizes. Bronze. Southern Uzbekistan. Contemporary of Kadphises(?).

14–16. Coins of Sanab (alias "Heraeus" or "Miaios"). Southern Tajikistan. Contemporary of Vima Kadphises (?).

14 obol; 15, 16 tetradrachms.
1, 7 Samarkand; 5, 6 Tashkent;
12 Moscow; the rest Leningrad.

Plate 22

IMITATIONS OF TETRADRACHMS AND DRACHMS OF HELIOCLES. BRONZE. SOUTHERN TAJIKISTAN, SOUTHERN UZBEKISTAN AND NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

1, 2. 1st century B.C.–early 1st century A.D.
3, 4. 1st century A.D.
5–8. Late 1st century A.D.–first half of 2nd century A.D.

1, 5 Termez; 2, 4 Tashkent; the rest Leningrad.

Plate 23

EARLY CHORASMIAN COINS. 1ST–4TH CENTURIES A.D.

1. Imitation of the tetradrachms of Eucratides, with "Chorasmian" *tamgha*. Silver. Locality uncertain. Late 2nd–1st century B.C.
2. Early Chorasmian "tetradrachm", without name of king.
3. King (*MLK'*) *wrtrmwš.*
4–5. King *wzm'r.* 5 bronze, without legend.
6. King *s'nβry.*
7. King *šr'm.*

All Leningrad.

Plate 24

1–4. Coins of Chorasmia 7th–8th centuries A.D.
1, 2. King *wzk'nšw'r.*
3. King *hwsrw.*
4. King *sy'wršprn*; with additional Sogdian legend on obverse.
5–17. Coins of western Sughd (Bukhārā). 4th–8th centuries A.D.

5, 6 silver; the rest bronze.

18. Coin of Kish (modern Karshi). 5th–6th centuries A.D. Bronze.
19. Coin of Kubādiyān. 5th–6th centuries A.D. Bronze.

All Leningrad.

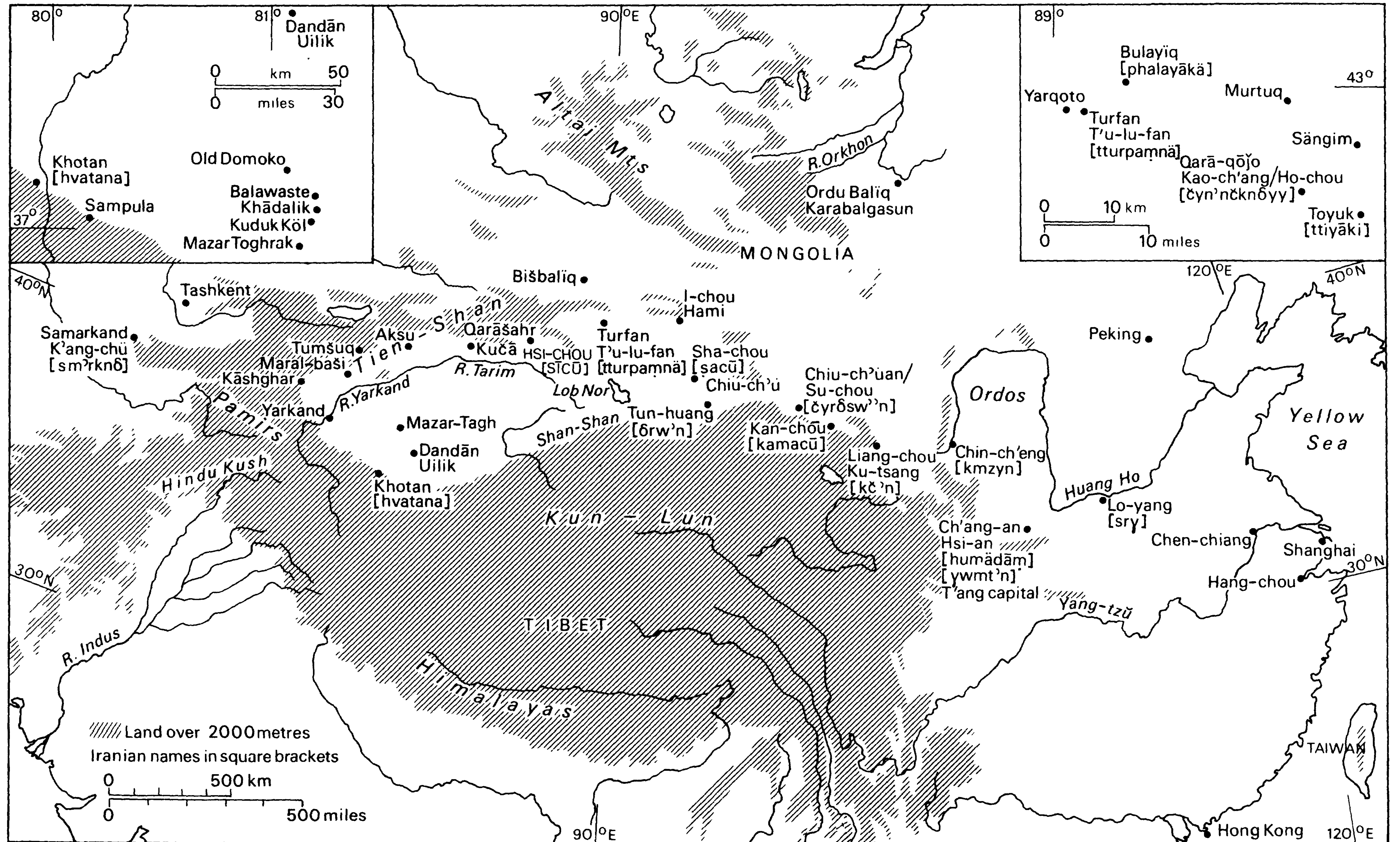
CHAPTER 7

THE IRANIAN SETTLEMENTS TO THE EAST OF THE PAMIRS

Although it was in 1922 that Rostovtzeff said, "We know but little of the history and archaeology of Central Asia and of the Iranian world",[1] these words remain valid today. Nomadic tribes speaking languages of Iranian origin must have been wandering about Central Asia from a very early period, probably from the first half of the second millennium B.C., but we do not know when they first began to settle in permanent villages. Isolated families may well have settled among foreigners from the earliest times.

In the case of one Iranian settlement in Central Asia that attained great fame in the first millennium A.D., we have several versions of the circumstances attending its foundation. But despite the prominence of the Iranian inhabitants of Khotan in this period, we have no information concerning their arrival. According to the Chinese and Tibetan accounts, which there is no reason to distrust, at any rate with regard to the broad outline of their accounts, the foundation of Khotan was effected by a compromise between exiled groups of Indians on the one hand and of Chinese on the other. All four of the accounts we have connect the Indian colonizing party with the son and ministers of the emperor Aśoka. This would place the foundation of Khotan firmly in the 3rd century B.C. The four accounts we have are found in two Chinese sources and in two Tibetan sources. The earliest is the account given by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsüan-tsang in his *Hsi-yü-chi*, dated to the 7th century A.D. With this the account in the Tibetan text known as the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇa* may be contemporary. Later are the accounts in the "Life of Hsüan-tsang" by his pupils Hui-li and Yen-ts'ung and in the Tibetan "Prophecy of the Li Country". Thus, even the earliest of them can only reflect the tradition current in Khotan in the 7th century concerning events a thousand years earlier. When Hsüan-tsang was in Khotan, the city was subservient to Chinese rule as it had lately been to that of the western Turks. Indian influence was everywhere present, and he duly recorded the use in Khotan of an Indian type of script and the large number of monasteries and adherents of the Mahāyāna.

[1] M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, 1922), p. viii.



Map 5. Iranian settlements east of the Pamirs.

Nevertheless, there are some indications of the early coexistence of Indians and Chinese in Khotan. From Yotqan, the ancient site of Khotan, we have a collection of coins from the first centuries A.D. bearing Chinese legends on the obverse and Indian Prakrit ones in the Kharoṣṭhī script on the reverse. Prakrit was indeed the administrative language of the nearby kingdom of Shan-shan in the 3rd century A.D., as we know from the discovery of Kharoṣṭhī documents, mainly at Niya. One of these documents, no. 661, from Endere, has been frequently discussed because of its special linguistic and historical importance. It is dated in the regnal year "of the great king of Khotan, king of kings". The king is named Vij'ida-siṃha, which corresponds with the royal name Bijaya Siṅha in the Tibetan "Prophecy of the Li Country", written more than half a millennium later. More striking still is the fact that he bears the title *hinajha* "generalissimo", which T. Burrow was the first to explain correctly as the Iranian equivalent of the well-known Sanskrit *senāpati*. We now have in fact in a Khotanese text the very word *hīnāysa*, corresponding to Tibetan *sde-dpon*, which elsewhere translates Sanskrit senāpati. Other traces of the influence of Khotanese have also been found on this document. The fact that the king's name is Sanskrit may indicate merely the preservation of a tradition handed down from an earlier period when the Indian colony provided the city's ruler. Hsüan-tsang states explicitly the contemporary belief that the royal power had been transmitted without interruption from the foundation of Khotan. But the use of a Khotanese word for the king's title and also of the term *kṣuna* "regnal period" (= Khotanese *kṣuṇa*) implies an established connection between the Iranian inhabitants and the royal power. Similarly, the use of Khotanese for royal rescripts in the 10th century makes it likely that the ruler of Khotan was a speaker of Iranian.

The name of Khotan is attested in a number of spellings, of which the oldest form is *hvatana*, in texts of approximately the 7th to the 10th century A.D. written in an Iranian language itself called hvatana by the writers. The same name is attested also in two closely related Iranian dialects, Sogdian and Tumshuq. The name need not be Iranian in origin, but it has the appearance of an Iranian word with the common adjectival suffix *-ana*. Attempts have accordingly been made to explain it as Iranian, and this is of some importance historically. My own preference is for an explanation connecting it semantically with the name Saka, for the Iranian inhabitants of Khotan spoke a language

closely related to that used by the Sakas in the north-west of India from the first century B.C. onwards.[1]

Another early name for Khotan is Gostana, transcribed by Hsüan-tsang as Ch'ü-sa-tan-na, and attested in a Khotanese document in the spellings Gaustamä and Gāṃsta. A bilingual text gives Gaustana-deśa as the Sanskrit equivalent of *Hvanya kṣīra* "land of Khotan". The origin of the name Gostana is unknown, but local legends show that *go-* was thought popularly to mean "cow" and *stana-* "breast". This implies a purely Sanskrit origin of the name. The connection with stana- "breast" has long been noted in the story of King Aśoka's abandoned son being kept alive by a breast that rose from the earth, whence his later name Sa-nu "Earth-breast" in Tibetan. The connection with *go-* "cow" can be seen in the story of the two traders from Sa-nu's entourage pursuing a pregnant cow. This allusion was missed by early scholars because of the false reconstruction from Hsüan-tsang's Ch'ü-sa-tan-na of Kustana instead of Gostana.

Most of our knowledge of the political history of Khotan derives from Chinese sources. The relevant passages have been translated by A. Rémusat, who compiled the first western history of Khotan. Our sources begin when relations with China in the first century B.C. become noticeable. In the Early Han Annals Khotan is a relatively small state, but its progress to a position of power is described in the Later Han Annals. About the middle of the 1st century A.D. king Yü-lin was attacked by and submitted to Hsien, king of So-chü (Yārkand). During the period A.D. 58–75, a general of Khotan called Hsiu-mo-pa revolted against Yārkand and made himself king of Khotan. After his death, the son of his elder brother, Kuang-te, having assumed power, destroyed Yārkand and made the kingdom powerful. Thirteen states as far as Shu-lo (Kashgar) came under the control of Khotan. There were then two great kingdoms east of the Pamirs: Khotan and Shan-shan.

During the last quarter of the 1st century A.D., Chinese power was supreme throughout the Tarim basin thanks to the great Chinese general Pan Ch'ao, but during the 2nd century their power steadily declined.

After a period of intermittent Chinese influence, Khotan could be described as "a pleasant and prosperous kingdom, with a numerous and flourishing population" by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien, who

[1] See also chapter 34.

arrived in Khotan about A.D. 400 on his way to India in search of Buddhist scriptures. He went on to say: "The inhabitants all profess our Law, and join in its religious music for their enjoyment. The monks amount to several myriads, most of whom are students of the Mahāyāna."[1]

Despite its submission from time to time to various peoples, to the T'u-yü-hun in A.D. 445, to the Juan-juan *c.* A.D. 470, to the Hephthalites *c.* A.D. 502–56 and to the western Turks *c.* A.D. 565–631, Khotan in the middle of the 7th century was evidently in much the same condition as it was when Fa-hsien was there, if we compare the account of Hsüan-tsang, who spent seven months or so in Khotan on his way back to China. Khotan was a cultural and religious centre of considerable importance. But barbarian invasions caused distress. At a later date, an unknown Khotanese poet laments them thus: "There are Māṃkuyas, Red Khocas and Hunas, Ciṃggas, Supīyas, who have harmed our Khotanese land."[2] Here we have a reference to the Tibetans, the Huns, the Chinese and the Sum-pa. The Māṃkuyas are not certainly identified.

It is as a consequence of the reassertion of Chinese power in the Tarim basin under the T'ang dynasty that we possess a considerable quantity of precise information concerning Khotan in the T'ang Annals. Here, for example, we are told that the family name of the ruling dynasty was Yü-ch'ih, a transcription of Khotanese Viśa', represented also in Tibetan Biźa and other spellings.

From the Chinese Annals we learn of the succession of kings of Khotan from A.D. 674 as follows:

1	Fu-she Hsiung	A.D. 674
2	Ching	691
3	Yü-ch'ih T'iao	725
4	[Yü-ch'ih] Fu-shih Chan	728
5	Fu-she Ta	736
6	Yü-ch'ih Kuei	740
7	Sheng	742–55
8	Shih-hu Yao	756–86

Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to explain these names as transcriptions or translations of the royal names given in the Tibetan "Prophecy of the Li Country".

From about A.D. 759 onwards the Tibetans gradually overran Ho-hsi

[1] Giles, *The Travels of Fa-hsien*, pp. 4–7.
[2] R. E. Emmerick, *The Book of Zambasta* (Oxford, 1968), p. 229.

and Lung-yu and cut off all communication between China and the protectorates of An-hsi (modern Turkestan; capital at ancient Kučā) and Pei-t'ing (protectorate whose seat was at Bišbalïq). In A.D. 848 the Chinese imperial commissioner Chang I-ch'ao at Tun-huang revolted against the Tibetans and took I-chou (= Hami or Qomul) and Hsi-chou. About A.D. 865 P'u-ku Tsün, *qaγan* of the Uighurs (Hui-hu), in alliance nominally with the Chinese, drove out the Tibetans and took control of the whole north of what is modern Sin-kiang.

The 10th-century geography *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* tells us that "The king of Khotan lives in great state and calls himself 'Lord of the Turks and Tibetans'. He lives on the boundary of China and Tibet.'[1] No such title has been found in the Khotanese documents, but it is probable that Khotan remained independent from the end of the 9th century until its conquest in A.D. 1005 by the Muslim ruler Yūsuf Qadïr Khān. The presence of Turks within the kingdom of Khotan is reflected in the large number of Turkish titles and names found in Khotanese documents.

The long period of separation of Khotan from China caused by the Tibetan power meant that no embassies were sent to China, and hence there is less information from Chinese sources. The first embassy after this period was the one sent in A.D. 938 by the Khotan ruler Li Sheng-t'ien, who has been identified with Viśa' Saṃbhava of the Khotanese documents. A sequence of kings from the Khotanese documents has been proposed as follows:[2]

A.D. 912–66	Viśa' Saṃbhava
967–77?	Viśa' Śūra
978–82?	Viśa' Dharma

This sequence is not, however, reflected in the Tibetan "Prophecy of the Li Country". There the last rulers mentioned in the chronological part of the work are:

1 Bijaya Saṅgrama
2 Bijaya Bikrama
3 Bijaya D͟harma
4 Bijaya Saṃb͟haba
5 Bijaya Bo͟han Chen-po

If Bijaya Saṅgrama is in fact to be identified with Sheng (A.D. 742–55) as has been recently suggested, this would place the composition of

[1] P. 85.
[2] E. G. Pulleyblank, "The date of the Staël-Holstein roll", *Asia Major* IV (1954), 94.

the "Prophecy of the Li Country" before A.D. 912. This would agree with the date mentioned above (A.D. 865) for the end of Tibetan supremacy in Central Asia.

If the dates proposed for the Khotan kings of the 10th century are correct, as they appear to be, the last years of Khotanese independence before the Muslim conquest will have been a great period of literary activity. From the reign of Viśa' Śūra we have the *Jātakastava*, the *Mañjuśrīnairātmyāvatārasūtra* and some Vajrayāna verses.

Several other royal names previously known only from the Tibetan "Prophecy of the Li Country" are now found in Khotanese texts. Tibetan Bijaya Kīrti appears as Viśa' Kīrtta, Viśa' Kīrttä; Bijaya Bikrama as Viśya Vikrraṃ; Bijaya Bohan Chen-po as Väśa' Vāhaṃ; Bijaya Saṅgrama as Śrī-Vījītta Sagrāma, Śrī Vījatta Sagrauma.

The local literature of Khotan is wholly Buddhist but is not confined to translations of Buddhist texts. A great variety of literature is available, including documents of historical importance.[1] The Khotanese manuscripts have for the most part come from the Tun-huang library (see below), but finds have been made at a number of sites, mainly the meagre remains of former shrines and monasteries, within about a hundred miles to the north and to the east of Khotan and at the old site of Khotan itself known as Yotqan. The location of such sites as Balawaste, Dandān-oilik, Domoko (Dumaqu), Khādalik, Kuduk Köl, Mazar Tagh, Mazar Toghrak and Sampula can be seen on map 5, based on the drawing of M. A. Stein, who explored and excavated them.[2] The influence of Khotan was no doubt strongly felt throughout this area at least until A.D. 1000.

North of the Yārkand river and south-west of Aqsu lie two small villages known as Maral-baši, formerly Barčuq, and Tumšuq. Their history is wholly unknown to literary sources. The name Tumšuq itself cannot be older than the 10th century when the Qarakhānids imposed Islam on the area, as the word is Turkish, meaning "beak". But in Pelliot's estimation it was one of the oldest Buddhist sites in Chinese Turkestan, its monastery dating from the end of the 4th century A.D. or the beginning of the 5th. In the court of the building complex at the Toquz-saray site was found a manuscript containing the formulas for the ceremony of ordination of monks. It is written in an Iranian language that is so closely connected with Khotanese that the two must be regarded as different dialects of a single Saka language. Thus it is

[1] See chapter 34.

[2] Stein, *Innermost Asia* IV, map 14.

clear that speakers of an Iranian language settled in Tumšuq, possibly as early as the 4th century A.D.

Six documents found in Maral-baši, one in Tumšuq and one in Murtuq are also written in the same language. They have been transcribed and translated by S. Konow. Murtuq is east even of Kučā and Qarāshahr, and the script certainly betrays the influence of Kučean. But it is convenient to label the language Tumšuq since most of the documents come from that area, and all may ultimately have come from there.

There are in addition three large folios and one small one written in Tumšuq, which have not yet been translated. Two of these texts are documents concerned with buying and selling articles connected with wearing apparel. One is evidently part of a religious text, probably the *Araṇemijātaka* known to us in Tokharian.

Even more widely scattered throughout Central Asia than the Sakas were the Iranian-speaking people known as Sogdian. The oldest form of the name in the language itself is attested in the Sogdian "Ancient Letters" as *swγδyk*. Among other forms, we have Sog-dag in a Tibetan manuscript from Tun-huang, and the well-known forms Σόγδοι in Herodotus, Suguda in Old Persian and Suγδa in Avestan. Although spoken over a wide area, the language shows remarkable uniformity in the written material extant despite its use for both secular and religious purposes (Buddhist, Christian and Manichaean) and its transmission in different scripts (Sogdian, Manichaean, Syriac).[1] In a valley near Samarkand a language known as Yaghnōbī, which continues a dialect of Sogdian different from any known to us in earlier sources, is still spoken at the present day.

The homeland of the Sogdians was, of course, the region of Samarkand, known to us now in Sogdian itself in the adjective *sm'rknδč* "pertaining to Samarkand", found in documents from the Sogdian homeland. Most of our material comes, however, from further east, but the Sogdians outside their homeland remained in contact with it, as the survival of some of their correspondence, the "Ancient Letters", shows.[2] Four of these letters were written in Tun-huang, Sogdian Δrw'n, Ptolemy's Θροάνα. As these letters can be dated to the year A.D. 313, we know that there were Sogdians in Tun-huang, apparently in large numbers, before building began in A.D. 366 at the famous site of Ch'ien-fo-tung, the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas", nine miles

[1] See chapter 33.

[2] See chapters 6 and 33.

south-west of the city. It was among the hundreds of cave-temples here that Aurel Stein in 1907 found a medieval library of Central Asian manuscripts. This library included among other things the largest proportion of extant Khotanese literature and a considerable amount of Sogdian, in particular the majority of the Buddhist Sogdian manuscripts. We know from the colophon of one of these that it was written in Tun-huang.

Tun-huang and Shou-ch'ang were sub-prefectures of Sha-chou. Although the name of Tun-huang has not so far been traced in Khotanese documents, Sha-chou, spelled Ṣacū, is frequent. The roll known as "the Staël–Holstein Miscellany" was written in Sha-chou. We have a document written by envoys reporting to the court of Khotan on the situation in Sha-chou in the 10th century and one issued from the court of Khotan to the *tteyi-hvāṃ* (Khotanese title = Chinese *ta-wang*) in Sha-chou. The latter document provides the first reference in Khotanese sources to the final struggle of Khotan with Kashgar. It tells of an attack on Kashgar and the capture of an elephant, among other things, from the Arab ruler. This must be the elephant referred to in the Chinese account of a Buddhist priest who brought a letter in A.D. 971 from the king of Khotan offering to send in tribute a dancing elephant which he had captured in a war against Kashgar.

A recent study of the colony of An-ch'eng, some five hundred metres east of Tun-huang town, showed that its three villages contained about 1,400 people, of whom a considerable number, to judge by their names, were likely to be Sogdian.

After Tun-huang, the most famous place in Central Asia associated with Iranian-speakers is the Turfan region. The name Turfan is known in Khotanese as Tturpaṃnä and in Chinese as T'u-lu-fan. For the history of the region, we have a sketch by S. Lévi[1] and the summary of "an unpublished memoir" by Pelliot "on the history of the Turfan region".[2] Turfan has been made famous in modern times by the discovery made there by the German Turfan expeditions (1902–14) of large numbers of manuscripts written in Iranian and other languages.

Most of the sites near Turfan yielded texts in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian as well as Sogdian. The site richest in texts was Qočo, modern Qarā-qōǰo, a few miles east of Turfan. This was the principal city of the Turfan region down to the end of the 14th century. The name of the city in Chinese sources is usually Kao-ch'ang or

[1] Fragments, pp. 15–19.

[2] Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* 1, p. 163.

Ho-chou. It began as a Chinese military colony in the 1st century B.C. and was frequently the administrative centre of the region. In accordance with its origin it is called in Sogdian in the *Mahrnāmag čyn'nčknδyy*, literally "the Chinese town". In about A.D. 790 it was conquered by the Tibetans, and after the fall of the Uighur empire in the Orkhon basin in A.D. 840–3, the Uighurs (Toquz Oghuz) made Qočo their southern capital. It has long been known from Arabic sources that these Toquz Oghuz were Manichaeans, and this is strikingly confirmed by the abundant writings in Manichaean script found there. A Chinese traveller of the 10th century A.D. reported Buddhist temples of T'ang date as well as temples belonging to the Manichaeans and others, either Zoroastrians or Nestorians.

From a Christian monastery near the hamlet of Bulayïq (probably Khotanese Phalayākä), north of Turfan, come a considerable number of Christian Sogdian texts, written in the Syriac script.

Yarqoto, a short distance west of Turfan, became the centre of administration of Hsi-chou "the Western District" after the T'ang conquest of Qočo in A.D. 640. Hsi-chou is known to Khotanese texts as Secū, Sīcū. Among the texts found at Yarqoto are Sogdian translations of parts of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* and the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*.

Middle Persian or Parthian and Sogdian manuscripts have also been found in three small places all near Qočo, namely Murtuq, Sängim and Toyuq. Toyuq was recognized in Khotanese Ttiyāki and in Chinese Ting-ku. In a large ruined monastery in picturesque Toyuq, von Le Coq found a half-destroyed library containing "the remains of Manichaean, Christian and Buddhist MSS., together with Chinese scrolls, Hephthalite fragments, and fragments in Kökturkish runes. Ten Iranian fragments in Manichaean script survive from Tuyoq, together with one New Persian fragment in Syriac script."[1]

The T'ang Annals describe the Sogdians as follows: "They are accustomed to write in horizontal lines. They excel in commerce and love profit; as soon as a man is twenty years old, he goes off into the neighbouring kingdoms; they have gone wherever it is possible to make a profit. The twelfth month is for them the beginning of the year. They follow the Buddhist religion; they offer sacrifice to the god of heaven."[2] This is a succinct description of their essential charac-

[1] Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script in the German Turfan Collection*, p. xvii.

[2] Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, pp. 134–5.

teristics. They established colonies in many places in Central Asia and went far into China, engaging especially in the silk trade. As for their calendar, it is well known that a number of works in the Chinese *Tripiṭaka* contain transcriptions of the Sogdian names of the planets. To their devotion to Buddhism and Zoroastrianism could be added that to Manichaeism. The Manichaean script, a variant of the Palmyrene, became a symbol of adherence to Manichaeism and was used by scribes writing in Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian, Uighur and Kučean.

Chinese sources provide evidence of Sogdian colonies in I-chou (Hami or Qomul) and in the region south of Lob Nor. We are told that there were "merchant Hu" (Sogdians) in I-chou during the Sui dynasty (A.D. 589–618). In A.D. 630, the chief of Hami, Shih Wan-nien (Shih is a Sogdian surname associated with Tashkent), submitted to the Chinese with seven cities, probably those south of Lob Nor. It is known that four of these were constructed in the period A.D. 627–49 by Sogdians under a great notable of Samarkand called K'ang Yen-tien.

One of the Sogdian "Ancient Letters", the second, dated to A.D. 313, tells of the destruction in A.D. 311 by the Hsiung-nu of the Chinese capital Lo-yang, Sogdian Srγ. Incidentally it mentions the presence of Indians and Sogdians there.

When the Uighurs sacked Lo-yang in A.D. 762, they remained there for several months during which their chief was converted to Manichaeism, which had been introduced at the Chinese court by a man from Persia in A.D. 694. When he departed in A.D. 763 he took with him four Manichaean monks to Ordu Baliq, the Uighur capital from A.D. 744–840. These events were commemorated in a trilingual inscription – Chinese, Turkish and Sogdian – set up by the Uighur qaγan Ai tängridä qut bulmiš alp Bilgä (A.D. 808–21) at the site of Karabalgasun on the left bank of the Orkhon river.

A detailed account of the fortunes of the Sogdians in the Ordos region has been reconstructed from Chinese sources by E. G. Pulleyblank. Sogdians lived in considerable numbers at the court of the qaγan of the northern Turks in present-day Mongolia. The people resented the favour shown to the Sogdians by Hsieh-li, the last qaγan of the first empire, who was captured by the Chinese in A.D. 630. The Chinese settled the captured Turks, including Sogdians, in "protected" prefectures. In A.D. 679 there were established Six Hu Prefectures in the southern part of the Ordos region. Five of the leaders of the Hu of the Six Prefectures who revolted from the Chinese in A.D. 721 had

Sogdian names. K'ang Tai-pin was executed in A.D. 721, and when his son was defeated in the following year, many of the Sogdians were moved into prefectures in several provinces. There were, however, many Sogdians in the armies of An Lu-shan, who headed the great rebellion in the middle of the 8th century which nearly overthrew the T'ang dynasty. An Lu-shan's father was a Sogdian and his mother a Turk. His name is probably a transcription of Sogdian *rwxšn-* "shining, bright". The Sogdian colonists finally left the Ordos region in A.D. 786 when they were moved to the region of Shuo Chou and Yün Chou.

We know of the presence of Sogdians in the 4th century A.D. at three of the cities on the route from Sha-chou to Ch'ang-an and in Ch'ang-an itself from the Sogdian "Ancient Letters". Leaving Sha-chou one comes first to Su-chou, found in Khotanese as Sauhä-cū, earlier known as Chiu-ch'üan, in which Henning saw Sogdian *čyrδsw''n*. The second Sogdian "Ancient Letter" is dated in the thirteenth year of the ruler of *čyrδsw''n*. The next place, Kan-chou, is not found in Sogdian but is mentioned frequently as Kamacū in 10th-century Khotanese documents. Then we have Liang-chou, earlier Ku-tsang, Sogdian *kč'n*. Sogdian "Ancient Letter" v, dated to A.D. 313, was written in *kč'n*, which is also mentioned in *Letter* II. In the 4th century Ku-tsang was an important town and the residence of the governor of the province of Liang. Chinese sources tell us that merchants of Su-t'e (Sogdiana) used to go in great numbers to the province of Liang, but that on the capture of Ku-tsang (A.D. 439) they were all taken prisoner. One other identifiable place on this route is mentioned in the second Sogdian "Ancient Letter", namely *kmzyn*, identified as Chin-ch'eng. It is probable that Sogdians resided there, but no further evidence is available.

R. Gauthiot was the first to recognize a Sogdian reference to Ch'ang-an, the T'ang capital, modern Hsi-an. According to its colophon, one of the Buddhist texts found in Tun-huang was actually written "in the city of Xumdān". Ch'ang-an was known also to the Khotanese as Humädāṃ. Henning found two references to Ch'ang-an as *'xwmt'n* in the second Sogdian "Ancient Letter".

The Iranians brought not only Manichaeism to China but also Nestorian Christianity. In A.D. 1625 there came to light the famous Nestorian monument of Hsi-an, written in Chinese and Syriac and dated in the year A.D. 781. It tells the early history of Christianity in China from the time of its introduction by a Persian monk named A-lo-pen, who came to Ch'ang-an in A.D. 635. Below the Chinese inscription is

a list of priests and monks including at least two with Iranian names. A certain Gabriel is described in Syriac as "priest and archdeacon and head of the church of Xumdān (*kmd'n*) and Sarag (*srγ*)". Saraγ, it will be recalled, is found in the Sogdian "Ancient Letters" as the name of Lo-yang.

The furthest east to which Iranians penetrated of which we have record is Chen-chiang, about 140 miles from the mouth of the river Yang-tzŭ. Marco Polo's notice of Christian churches at Chen-chiang has been confirmed by a fairly detailed account in a Chinese work of the 14th century. A certain Mar-Sargis, whose family came from Samarqand, founded six churches in Chen-chiang and one in Hang-chou in the second half of the 13th century A.D.

The remarkable diffusion of Iranians throughout Central Asia and into China was clearly due to two causes: their love of trade and their desire to propagate their own religion.

PART II

NUMISMATICS

Much of Iranian history in the Parthian and Sasanian periods, particularly for eastern kingdoms and marginal dynasties, is based on numismatic evidence; separate treatment of this evidence has therefore been deemed helpful. The coins of eastern Iranian kingdoms and the kingdoms of Transoxiana, however, have already been examined in the chapters on their political history, since numismatic material forms the chief basis for those accounts. Chapters 8 *a* on Parthian coins and 8 *b* on the minor states in southern Iran present an essentially sequential treatment of the subject, while Chapter 9 discusses Sasanian coins chiefly in terms of their types, aspects and significance. Editor.

CHAPTER 8 *(a)*

PARTHIAN COINS

At the time of the Parthian uprising in 238 B.C.,[1] the currency circulating in northern Iran was similar to that of the rest of the Seleucid empire. However, the mints of Bactra and Hecatompylos were already tending to cater for a preference for the drachm in their area, whereas at Ecbatana this denomination was scarcely issued between the reigns of Antiochus I and III, the emphasis being on the tetradrachm instead.[2] The weight standard employed derived from the Attic system so that in the 3rd century B.C. the drachm weighed about 4 grammes. The regular obverse for this Seleucid coinage was the royal head, bound with the diadem and facing right, while a common reverse motif depicted Apollo seated left on the omphalos and holding a bow.

The majority of the earliest Parthian issues now extant come from a hoard unearthed in the Atrak valley west of Bujnūrd.[3] It contained one tetradrachm and about 1500 drachms, the latest non-Parthian specimen being struck for Diodotus of Bactria; accordingly, a possible occasion for the deposition was the eastern expedition of Antiochus III who set out from Ecbatana in 209 B.C. The most worn, and hence the first Parthian group shows on the obverse a beardless head facing right and wearing a diadem-bound *bashlyk*; the reverse portrays an archer in steppe dress, seated left on a stool and holding a bow (pl. 1 (1)). It is no surprise to find that they follow Hellenistic prototypes relatively closely in fabric and design, but there are some unusual features.

In particular, the reverse inscription – ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ, "[the coin] of Arsaces, autocrat", is unprecedented at this time although the title does appear later not only on Parthian issues but also in Syria and amongst the Greeks of north-west India. In Seleucid protocol, it implied "elected general",[4] an apt enough description of the position of Arsaces I, to whom we may attribute the group. The bashlyk, too, while typically nomadic, was also a satrapal head-dress in

[1] Wolski, "L'Historicité d'Arsace Ier", p. 235; although accepted here, Wolski's hypothesis cannot be taken as proven. [See pp. 28ff. for a discussion of the date.]

[2] Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, pp. 188–220, 247, 252; *Western Seleucid Mints*, pp. 29 and 30.

[3] Abgarians and Sellwood, "A Hoard of Early Parthian drachms", p. 103.

[4] E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* II (London, 1902), Appendix Q.

the Achaemenian period; its diadem binding was retained by all subsequent Parthian princes for their numismatic portraits. The archer of the reverse remained the substantive type for all Parthian drachms down to the end of the dynasty, and is often supposed to represent Arsaces I as well, although parallels with the types of Achaemenian satrapal coinages have been pertinently drawn.[1] In weight these early issues set a pattern for the future, for, in common with later drachms, few of them fall outside the limits 3.5 to 4.2 grammes. Their fabric is peculiar to the plateau of Iran, the obverse being slightly convex and the reverse more markedly concave. Although these coins are hand-struck, the craftsmen tried to keep the axes of the two dies parallel. Such a practice may have been borrowed from the Bactra mint where reversed alignment (i.e. at 180°) was almost obligatory.[2] The artistic milieu in which the engravers worked was, as a whole, less obviously Iranian than it had been under the Achaemenians.

The subsequent drachms of Arsaces I, again from the hoard, demonstrate his attempts to individualize the coinage of his nascent state. To start with, the obverse head is turned left (pl. 1 (2)) and then the archer is seated right. At the same time, part of the Greek legend is replaced by an Aramaic word which may be *krny* (see App. 2, p. 317) – this is perhaps cognate with the family name Karen but in Achaemenian usage it was the equivalent of *στρατηγός*[3] and therefore close to our assumed meaning for "autocrat". A monogram is inserted under the stool. In Seleucid mints such symbols were associated with specific controllers, being transferred with them from one location to another. However, this particular monogram (see App. 2, p. 316) appears later in the series and may be related to Mithradādkart, the citadel of Nisā,[4] perhaps named after some Mithradates of the Achaemenian family.

The long reign postulated here for the first king of the dynasty leaves no room for Tiridates, a brother mentioned by some classical authors; accordingly it is assumed that Arsaces I was succeeded about 211 B.C. or a little earlier by his son of the same name,[5] whose drachms were the latest in the Bujnūrd hoard. These have an obverse similar to that used by his father – beardless head in bashlyk facing left – but on the reverse the inscription is reduced to the simple ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ, while the

[1] J. Brindley, *NC* 1972, 320.
[2] Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, p. 245 ff.
[3] Bivar, "A Satrap of Cyrus the Younger", p. 123, note 5.
[4] Dyakonov and Livshits, *Dokumenty iz Nisy*, Ostracon 1693.
[5] Wolski, "Arsace II et la généalogie des premiers Arsacides", p. 138. Cf. pp. 28 ff. and pp. 686 ff. for discussion of the successor of Arsaces I.]

monogram is abandoned for the symbols "A" or an eagle (pl. 1 (3)); these may signify different mints. A worn bronze coin of Arsaces II is known, having a bow-case on the reverse; its original weight must have been about 5 grammes, so that it circulated as two chalkoi, where eight chalkoi equalled one obol, a sixth of a drachm. (This sixfold division has persisted to the present day with the *dāng*.) After Antiochus had brought Parthia within the Seleucid orbit once more, it is probable that the coinage just discussed was deliberately suppressed, thus accounting for its extreme rarity until the discovery in the Atrak valley.

As a result of the downfall of Antiochus at Magnesia, *c.* 190 B.C., the Greek bonds on Parthia were again loosened and an independent currency became feasible. Mithradates I, who ascended the throne *c.* 171 B.C., was largely responsible for the political expansion of Parthia and so most recent studies are in agreement that the coins now to be described were struck by this prince.[1] To begin with they have on the obverse the beardless head in bashlyk copied from previous issues, but this is then replaced by a similarly attired bust – busts had been introduced on Bactrian silver from about 190 B.C.; for the reverse, the archer is seated on the Apollonian omphalos, not a stool. The inscription augments from the plain ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ, through ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (pl. 1 (4)) to ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ "of the great king Arsaces" (pl. 1 (5)), in response no doubt to territorial acquisitions and increased imperial pretensions. The Greek writers commented with some dismay on the continued use of the dynastic name rather than a more personal one. Indeed this custom was perpetuated until the advent of the Sasanians and has been one of the biggest impediments to an elucidation of the Parthian series. The beardless head, a Hellenistic convention deriving in Iran from Alexander the Great, was hereafter generally avoided on Parthian coins, nor does the bashlyk reappear. To judge from reverse die similarities, the immediately succeeding coinage of Mithradates was struck at the same mint, perhaps Hecatompylos, as his first issues. The obverse bust now has a long beard and is diademed only (pl. 1 (6)); the denominations include drachms and obols in silver as well as bronzes.

Ecbatana only fell to the Arsacid in the reign of Alexander Bala, *c.* 148 B.C.,[2] but having once captured this important mint, Mithradates

[1] Newell, "The Coinage of the Parthians", p. 476; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 318; O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Copenhagen, 1966), p. 177.

[2] G. K. Jenkins, "Notes on Seleucid Coins", *NC* 1951, p. 16; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 339.

forthwith availed himself of its facilities. Copious issues of bronze coins were struck. These have a right-facing obverse bust and such uncompromisingly Greek reverses as the galloping Dioscuri as well as indigenous ones like an elephant (pl. 1 (8)). Denominations range from octochalkoi to the single unit. A few drachms (pl. 1 (7)) and obols (pl. 1 (9)) resembling the bronze in having irregular die axes were also coined.[1] Finally, *c.* 140 B.C., Parthian forces occupied Mesopotamia with its celebrated city of Seleucia on the Tigris. Here again, Mithradates' issues stem directly from those of the monarchs just ejected, having a right-facing obverse portrait. On their reverse the drachms carry Zeus enthroned and the tetradrachms Herakles standing (pl. 1 (11, 10)). The latter, the first Arsacid coins of this denomination, should weigh upwards of 16 grammes, but are often very much less in practice. They have the expanded legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, "Of the great king Arsaces, philhellene", the last epithet being a somewhat transparent attempt to placate the Greek commercial element in the newly conquered lands. Many specimens bear the dates ΓΟΡ and ΔΟΡ – 173 and 174 in the Seleucid reckoning (commencing in October 312 B.C.) and so corresponding to 140/139 and 139/138 B.C. It does not seem that, in general, the Arsacids used the Nīsān New Year in conjunction with Seleucid era dating.[2] Apart from a few possible exceptions, Parthian tetradrachms were issued from Seleucia only, while drachms hardly circulated there at all, being struck almost entirely at mints in Iran proper.[3]

As a corollary to the establishment of Arsacid control of Mesopotamia, the smaller states of Characene, Elymais and Persis were also forced to acknowledge Parthian suzerainty. The earliest coins of Phraates II, the young son of Mithradates, seem to come from the mint of Susa in Elymais; the tetradrachms in particular (with a reverse design of Apollo on omphalos) follow closely the style of the issues of Kamnaskires, the local dynast.[4] The bulk of Phraates' output consists of drachms, obols and bronzes from Iran. The obverse portrait is only lightly bearded and the "archer" reverse carries the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ, "Of the great king Arsaces, of divine descent", the last title referring to a deification of Mithradates. An innovation is the presence on the

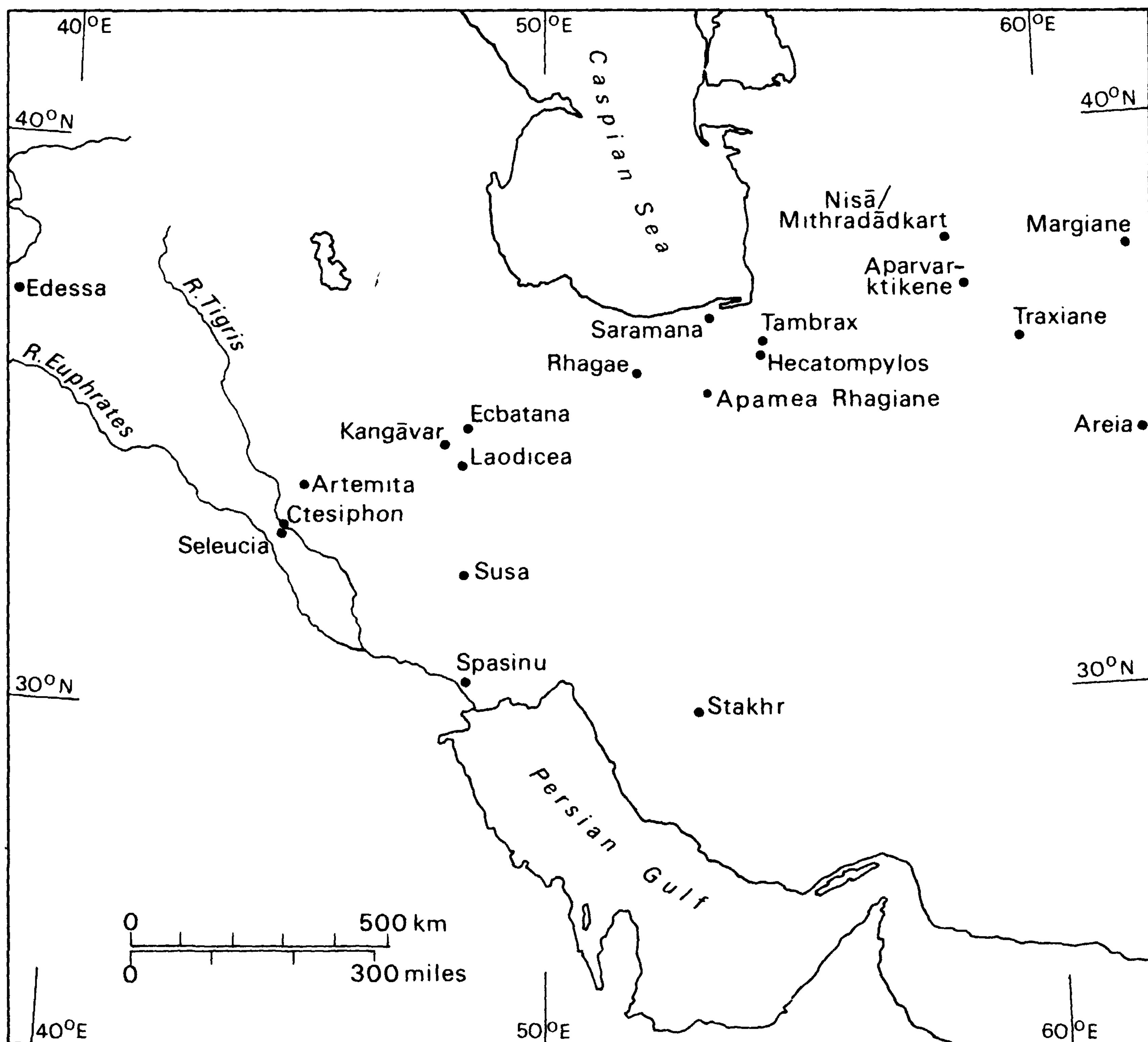
[1] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 340.
[2] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 33; Sellwood, "The Parthian New Year".
[3] McDowell, *Coins from Seleucia*, p. 158.
[4] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 383.

drachms of mint names such as NI (Nisā) (pl. 1 (13)), TAM (Tambrax), APEIA or ΣΥΛΣ(?) among others. No doubt in line with Seleucid custom, the chief mint of Ecbatana dispensed with these insignia; one drachm, perhaps struck in this city, substitutes ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ, "loving his father", for ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ (pl. 1 (12)). Towards 130 B.C. Antiochus VII led an invasion of Mesopotamia, but this was eventually defeated and an issue of characteristically Greek style from Seleucia (pl. 1 (14)) saluted Phraates' victory. These coins used to be attributed to a favourite of Phraates, Himerus, who seized power after his protector's death, but this identification has now been abandoned on numismatic grounds.[1]

During the next decade, a westward-thrusting nomad influx was deflected by the Parthian armies down through Sīstān and thence into the Indus valley. Unhappily, in the fighting two monarchs were lost, Phraates II in 128 B.C. and Artabanus I, his uncle, four years later. Taking advantage of this Arsacid preoccupation with the eastern frontier, Hyspaosines, prince of Characene, over-ran Mesopotamia[2] and, in something of a quandary as to whom they should recognize, the Seleucia mint authorities temporized by striking tetradrachms (pl. 1 (15)) with the effigy of the long-dead Mithradates I. (Such a subtle response to an uncertain situation had been employed at Antioch not many years earlier.)[3] At the same time Artabanus' substantive issue of drachms and bronze was coming from the Iranian mints, probably Ecbatana (pl. 2 (2)), Rhagae and Margiane. The obverse bust is distinctive for its hairstyle of concentric waves, while the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ, "Of the great king Arsaces, loving his brother", alludes to Mithradates I, the king's elder brother, although a few examples (pl. 2 (1)) use the reverse dies of Phraates' drachms. Parthian jurisdiction having been re-established in Seleucia, we get a series of tetradrachms (pl. 2 (3)) some of which bear the date ΗΠΡ (equivalent to 125/4 B.C.). These are commonly regarded as amongst the most superior examples of Parthian numismatic art. One drachm has the letters EKP in the reverse exergue – they have been plausibly interpreted as the date 125 of the Arsacid era and thus corresponding to 124 B.C.[4]

The expulsion of Hyspaosines appears to have been principally the

[1] Newell, "The Coinage of the Parthians", p. 478.
[2] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 382.
[3] O. Mørkholm, "A Posthumous Issue of Antiochus IV of Syria", *NC* 1960, p. 25.
[4] Rapson, "Markoff's Coins", p. 212.



Map 6. Parthian and sub-Parthian mints.

work of Mithradates II, son of Artabanus, and some of the new king's earliest coins (pl. 2 (5)) were in fact frequently overstruck on bronze issues of the invader.[1] The youngest portrait of Mithradates is found on a series of tetradrachms (pl. 2 (4)) – the last to have a right-facing bust – with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ, "Of the great king Arsaces, (god) manifest", peculiar to the reign, but here set in four vertical lines, as on the coins of his predecessors. With the first major group of Mithradates II (including tetradrachms, pl. 2 (6), drachms, pl. 2 (7, 8), triobols and bronze) the portrait is always turned left, while the royal name and titles are arranged in a square. Many of the drachms carry monograms at various points in the field (cf. pl. 2 (7)), but it is not normally possible to associate these with specific mints. The epithet ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ "deliverer", appears on a few drachms (pl. 2 (9)) and is appropriate to Mithradates'

[1] Newell, "Mithridates of Parthia and Hyspaosines of Characene".

liquidation of the nomad menace. The same denomination continues with a series on which the archer's omphalos seat gives way to a throne and he holds both a bow and an arrow. Cuneiform tablets[1] tell us that about 109 B.C. Mithradates assumed the title "king of kings", an enhanced dignity reflected in the new inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ, "Of the great king of kings, Arsaces, (god) manifest" (pl. 2 (10)). Later the now aged monarch is depicted wearing a pearl-embroidered tiara of a style widely imitated by later princes, not only in Parthia but elsewhere (pl. 2 (12)). Previous to this the bronze issues from Susa had had their own distinctive types (pl. 2 (11)), but now they become assimilated to those of the northern mints, especially Ecbatana. However, Susa still retained the system of altering the reverse designs annually, an administrative convenience that helps us to calculate within limits the lengths of tenure of power of successive monarchs at Susa.[2]

The Susa coins imply that Mithradates had been supplanted there by some other king perhaps as early as 94 B.C., although he is last mentioned by classical authors in the context of events in 88 B.C. Certainly, civil conflict may have caused the legend of Mithradates' latest drachms (pl. 3 (1)) to be altered to ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ, "Of the king of kings, Arsaces, the just, the beneficent and philhellene", manifestly aimed at ranging the Greeks of Parthia amongst his supporters and used on one of the Avroman parchments, also dated 88 B.C.[3]

For the next thirty years or so, the attributions in the Arsacid series become unusually contentious, and it will be seen from the chronological table (pp. 98–9) that only partial agreement between successive investigators has ever been achieved. Accordingly, those proposed here can be regarded as no more than provisional.

The original interpretation of a sequence of cuneiform tablets[4] has recently been modified[5] so that it appears that in Babylonia in 90 B.C., a ruler called Gotarzes (I) was expelled by another named Orodes (I); the latter was in turn forced to give way to some further prince in 80 B.C. A recent study of the die-engraver sequence has now led me to a different order for the issues of this Parthian "dark age" from that put forward by Wroth, an order which I had previously accepted.[6] This

[1] Minns, "Parchments from Avroman", p. 34.
[2] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 389.
[3] Minns, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[4] Minns, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[5] Simonetta, "Some remarks on the Arsacid Coinage of 90–57 B.C.", p. 15.
[6] Sellwood, "Wroth's Unknown Parthian King", p. 128.

new arrangement has the additional advantage of conforming rather better to available suitably detailed hoard evidence,[1] and yet it can still be reconciled with the annual design change postulated by Le Rider for the Susa bronzes.

Coming immediately after the issues of Mithradates II is a group of drachms and bronze which I allocate[2] to Gotarzes I (pl. 3 (2)). They show a monarch wearing a new tiara ornamented on the crest with a row of recumbent stags or some other cervines, with or without horns perhaps according to the season rather than the engraver's whim; on its side a horn replaces the star of Mithradates' tiara. The reverse legend runs ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ (or ΘΕΟΠΑΤΡΟΥ in error) ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ, "Of the great king, Arsaces, of divine descent, victorious". In the Near East at this juncture, the claim to be "king of kings" was ceded by the Arsacids to Tigranes the Great of Armenia – hence the restricted titulature of Gotarzes' coins.

We next come to Orodes I, whose portrait is adorned with a tiara similar to that of Mithradates II, while the inscription on his issues reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, "Of the great king, Arsaces, autocrat, loving his father, (god) manifest, philhellene". The fourth word may refer to Orodes' position as leader of the military forces which overcame Gotarzes' usurpation, but the fifth can hardly imply any affection for Mithradates who was still alive in 88 B.C., although in control merely of Kurdistan. Towards the end of his reign Orodes recommenced the issue of tetradrachms (pl. 3 (3)) and triobols in addition to the usual drachms (pl. 3 (4)) and bronze – a few of the drachms (pl. 3 (5)) have a fleur de lys on the side of the tiara. At about this time, petty rulers such as Otanes began countermarking Parthian issues circulating in eastern Iran with their own small punches (pl. 3 (6)).

The throne now passed to a prince of whose personal name we are ignorant. Both large (pl. 3 (8)) and small silver (pl. 3 (9)) were struck throughout his reign. On the obverse we see a diademed bust with a new type of hair style which conceals the ears; the legend is ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, "Of the great king, Arsaces, of divine

[1] Simonetta, "Some remarks", p. 27.

[2] An early date for this issue has also been postulated on grounds other than the engraver sequence by Dobbins, "The successors of Mithradates II".

descent, the beneficent, (god) manifest, philhellene" – the last two words are omitted on the drachms but a few rare specimens of this denomination carry mint names demonstrating that the issuer's sway extended from Rhagae, through Nisā and Areia (pl. 3 (10)) to Margiane; the enigmatic addition ΚΑΤΑ ΣΤΡΑΤΕΙΑ (pl. 3 (11)) seems to signify the peripatetic mint attached to the court.[1] A tablet[2] with a slightly anomalous reading, of 75 B.C., may indicate a brief interruption of the reign of the first unknown king by that of a further one who struck tetradrachms (pl. 3 (7)) resembling the later coins of Mithradates II but having an inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΠΙ-ΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ, "Of the great king, Arsaces, (god) manifest, philhellene, the beneficent". It will be remembered that Mithradates adopted the wider pretension to be "king of kings", not just "great king" well before his assumption of the tiara; any error in this respect would surely have been fatal *lèse majesté* for the mint controller.

The nomads beyond the border of Khurāsān yet again played a role in Arsacid history, the next monarch, Sinatruces, having been assisted to the throne by their efforts. Already an octogenarian at his installation, he appears to have reigned for about seven years until *c.* 70 B.C. Admittedly, the modified interpretation of the Susa issues adopted here only permits him a rule of two or three years in that city and, indeed, his reign perhaps overlaps that of the Unknown King mentioned above, but the current fragmented state of the Arsacid empire, already obvious before the death of Mithradates II, is sufficient explanation for this discrepancy. Sinatruces' tetradrachms (pl. 4 (1)), which have only recently been discovered,[3] and drachms (pl. 3 (12)), depict him in a tiara decorated on the side with a fleur de lys, and having a row of pellets on stalks around the crest; with the smaller silver we also find behind the royal bust an "anchor", often thought to pertain to the Seleucids but also among the insignia of a deity at Susa.[4] The legend runs ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, "Of the great king Arsaces, the beneficent, (god) manifest, philhellene". Many of the drachms have been struck from dies on which the distinctive "anchor", crest pellets

[1] C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic period* (New Haven, Conn., 1934), p. 98.
[2] Minns, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[3] Waggoner, "The Coinage of Phraates III", p. 18, no. 15.
[4] G. F. Hill, "The Coinage of the Ancient Persians", *SPA* I, p. 404.

and even the fleur de lys were erased. Such an official action may be the result of political uncertainty and has repeated parallels in the Parthian series.[1]

The mints' dilemma is accounted for when we consider the succeeding coinage (pl. 4 (4)). This is novel in that on the reverse is normally placed one of a series of monograms which persisted down to the end of the Arsacid epoch while the obverse depicts a bare-headed, short-bearded monarch. Now Sinatruces was eventually followed by his son who employed the same titulature on his coins which are discussed below and so the prince here in question must be some usurper, possibly Darius of Media Atropatene, a client of Tigranes.[2] Obviously, Sinatruces' dies could not be modified to the new designs and so they were altered to resemble those of some earlier unexceptionable monarch such as Orodes I (cf. pl. 3 (5)). Let us now turn to the monograms (see App. 2, p. 316). Their introduction seems to have been inspired by the complete mint names met with on the coins of the unknown prince contemporary with Sinatruces. The most common of them is ΑΓ, with a later form ΑΓΤ; Newell's ascription[3] to the chief Median city of Ecbatana (or Agmatana), the modern Hamadān, is surely correct. When we see that it can be resolved into Α + Γ or Α + Γ + Τ we have a clue to the interpretation of some of the others. Thus ΡΓ breaks down to Ρ + Γ, probably Rhagae as shown by engraver links with the named drachms of a few years previously. Similarly I believe that ΜΘΤ, which contains Μ + Θ + Τ, represents Mithradādkart, the citadel of Nisā; indeed there are many engraver links with drachms carrying the monogram (or rather letters) ΝΙ, which must be Nisā itself. Drachms with the monogram ΣΤΡ are extensively die-linked with others bearing ΑΓ or ΡΓ or ΜΘΤ. Since it can be resolved into Σ + Τ + Ρ for the substantive part of ΚΑΤΑ ΣΤΡΑΤΕΙΑ, our earlier theory that we have here the travelling mint attached to the court is confirmed; such an institution would clearly use local facilities where available. Most of the other symbols or letters can, in the same way, be associated with towns of importance in the Parthian empire.

Tetradrachms, drachms and bronze are known for the substantive issue of Darius (?) and their inscription is ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ

[1] D. Sellwood, "Some Politic Alterations in the Parthian Series" in R. A. G. Carson (ed.), *Mints, dies and currency* (London, 1971), pp. 33–7.

[2] Sellwood, "Wroth's Unknown Parthian King", p. 128.

[3] Newell, "The Coinage of the Parthians", p. 482.

ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Of the great king, Arsaces, loving his father, the beneficent, (god) manifest, philhellene". A few associated tetradrachms portray the prince in a tiara with a horn on the side (pl. 4 (3)). A rare issue of drachms (pl. 4 (2)) and bronze is probably also to be attributed to the same ruler; the facing head on them is a delightful example of the frontality so characteristic of Parthian art; their legend alters ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ to ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ, "of divine descent".[1]

At length, Phraates III, son of Sinatruces, gained control of the minting areas of the empire. The initial tenuousness of his hold is no doubt the explanation of Pompey's contemptuous refusal to accede to the Arsacid's claim to be recognized once more as "king of kings". Phraates' coins have the same titles as those of his father but they are differently disposed about the seated archer and on the obverse his effigy is bare-headed; they comprise tetradrachms, drachms (pl. 4 (5)), diobols and bronze. At this time the coinage from Susa ceases for a decade or so. For his final issue (pl. 4 (7)), Phraates assumed the tiara originally worn by Gotarzes I, with the row of stags around the crest; on the tetradrachms he made an explicit claim to divinity by inserting ΘΕΟΥ (the god) in the legend (pl. 4 (6)).

The parricides Mithradates III and Orodes II, having disposed of their father, Phraates, *c.* 57 B.C., soon clashed over the succession. Initially Mithradates seems to have been paramount and so we shall deal with his issues as a whole. Their portrait is without head-gear and a distinctive feature is the segmented necklet worn in place of the usual spiral torque. On the reverse we read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΥΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Of the great king, Arsaces, the just, (god) manifest, well-born of the god, and philhellene" (pl. 4 (8)), which was later expanded to begin ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ, perhaps as counter-propaganda to the same title of "king of kings" found on Orodes' coins. All Mithradates' known tetradrachms, which were inscribed with the personal name ΜΙΘΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ, have been overstruck by Orodes with his own dies.[2] On the drachms, irregular inscriptions starting with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΝΤΟΣ (implying perhaps the status of sub-king) emphasize official perplexity and in one case the mint went to the extreme of circumspection with the poorly engraved ΥΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΑΤΟΥ, "son of Phraates" (pl. 4 (9)).[3]

[1] The same epithets as the unknown king, to whom he may be related.
[2] Dressel, "Ein Tetradrachmon des Mithradates III", p. 159.
[3] Wroth, *BMC Parthia*, p. 66, no. 41.

Orodes II commenced his coinage with drachms (pl. 4 (10)) and bronze featuring Nike crowning the obverse bust, doubtless a reference to the initial defeat and subsequent death of Mithradates. The inscription, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Of the king of kings, loving his father, the just, (god) manifest, philhellene", with its professed regard for his father, is even more hypocritical than the one used by his brother. Such scant heed for veracity was common enough in the power politics of the Hellenistic age but it is sad to find nomadic virtues abandoned for Greek vices. On later issues (pl. 4 (11)) Nike is omitted or erased from the die.[1] Surprisingly there is no overt reference in Parthian numismatics to the overwhelming victory of Carrhae, but some rare tetradrachms (pl. 5 (1)), ascribed to this period on stylistic grounds and reading ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΤΙΣΤΟΥ "Of the king of kings and founder, Arsaces", have an appropriate titulature – Orodes was truly the refounder of Arsacid fortunes after years of Armenian domination. More compelling evidence for the altered circumstances of commerce in Parthia is the commonness, even today, of the drachms of Orodes; they exist in thousands and must have been struck in millions (pl. 4 (12), pl. 5 (2, 3, 5)). The royal features became increasingly gross as the reign proceeded, showing some attempt still at a true portrait, while, at the very end, a degree of idealization is apparent. Later coins of all denominations, tetradrachms (pl. 5 (4)), drachms, triobols, diobols, obols and bronze, introduce a wart on the king's brow, an attribute which came to have the significance of a guarantee of Arsacid blood for succeeding monarchs.[2] Religious motives have been adduced to explain the presence on the drachms of a star and crescent, but although they may have meant that Orodes was brother of the sun and moon it is more likely that the addition of such symbols was encouraged as a bureaucratic convenience. The normal titulature of Orodes was ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Of the king of kings, Arsaces, the beneficent, the just, (god) manifest, philhellene", and this was retained virtually intact for all silver coins during the next two and a half centuries. Legibility, of course, varied both chronologically and geographically, the tetra-

[1] Sellwood, "Some Politic Alterations", pp. 34ff.

[2] G. D. Hart, "Trichoepithelioma and the Kings of Ancient Parthia", *Canadian Medical Association Journal* xciv (Ottawa, 1966), pp. 547–9. I am grateful to P. J. Casey, Esq., for this reference.

drachms never deteriorating quite so far as the drachms. Under Orodes the drachms from further east suffered a continual metal debasement.[1] Obols from the ΠΡ mint have an abbreviated inscription incorporating the personal name ΥΡΩΔΟΥ (pl. 5 (6)), showing that the then current Greek equivalent of the Iranian was "Hyrodes". On the drachms and fractions, the standard "archer" reverse is retained but with the tetradrachms we meet designs such as the king enthroned, Tyche standing or kneeling before him; abbreviations of the month dates occasionally appear in the field. Finally, for the bronze it is possible that the reverse type was changed annually; in addition to the Seleucid inheritance of horses and bow-cases, we meet more exotic types, such as a fortress.

Orodes' eldest son, Pacorus I, was appointed to lead an invasion of Syria and Asia Minor, although true command rested with the renegade Labienus. Perhaps because of the influence of his nominal subordinate, Pacorus is depicted in the Roman fashion, short-haired and beardless, on his rare drachms (pl. 5 (7)) and bronze. In celebration of initial success, Pacorus caused a Nike to be placed behind his head. However, he shortly perished in a Roman ambush, throwing open the question of the succession.

This uncertainty was fatal to Orodes. The next son, Phraates IV, safeguarded his own position by stifling the old king and then slaughtering his brothers and their families. Such domestic commotion does not seem to have affected the economic situation in Parthia, since the mints poured out their products at the same level as under Orodes in Iran and in even greater volume in Mesopotamia. While all Phraates' coinage depicts him with a wart on his brow, there are natural differences between the denominations. The tetradrachms (pl. 6 (1)) have a variety of reverse designs similar to those of Orodes and since they mostly bear month and year dates we learn that some types were being struck simultaneously for more than a decade. The drachm effigy, easily distinguished by the appearance at the same time of the wart and a segmented necklet, usually has an eagle behind it and this is later supplemented by a star and crescent (pl. 5 (8, 9, 10, 11), pl. 6 (2)). For the contemporary Susa issues the silver content almost vanishes. The flans of Phraates' bronze coins become so small as to be barely adequate to receive the impression of the dies and after this reign few of them carry any inscription at all.

[1] Caley, "Chemical Composition of Parthian Coins".

The Romans, intent on recovering the prestige lost at Carrhae, renewed hostilities against Phraates, but Antony and his legions nearly came to the same end as Crassus. A more serious threat was provided by Roman support for a pretender, Tiridates, who struck a few tetradrachms (pl. 5 (12)) at Seleucia in 26 B.C.; on the reverse we read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΕ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡ ΦΙΛΟΡΟΜΑΙΟ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "Of the king of kings, Arsaces, the beneficent, autocrat, Romanophile, (god) manifest, philhellene", an advertisement for his collaborators. In spite of general unpopularity, Phraates survived these attacks, overstriking captured tetradrachms of both Antony and Tiridates with his own dies (pl. 6 (1)).[1]

The dates on Tiridates' coins permit inferences to be drawn about calendrical usages in Parthia. The sequence of the Macedonian–Seleucid months runs Dios (roughly equivalent to October), Apellaios, Audynaios, Peritios, Dystros, Xandikos, Artemisios, Daisios, Panemos, Loos, Gorpiaios, Hyperberetaios and, when necessary, an intercalary Embolimos. The three months of Tiridates' tetradrachms are Xandikos, Artemisios and Daisios, a compact continuous group. It has been suggested that the Arsacids commenced their year with Artemisios (corresponding to the Babylonian month Nīsān). We see that this would entail a nine-months gap between Daisios and Xandikos, inherently less probable. Similar sequences supporting a Dios start to the year occur elsewhere in the Parthian tetradrachm series.

Augustus realized the futility of force and more diplomatically recovered the lost legionary "eagles" by an exchange of gifts. Phraates received a slave-girl, Musa, with whose charms he became so besotted that he effectively disinherited his older offspring and settled the succession on her son, Phraataces. Such unwonted generosity gained its due reward when Phraates was despatched by this pair about 2 B.C. The classical world was far more shocked by the subsequent marriage between Phraataces and Musa. The coins of the new king can be separated from those of his father by the presence of a flying Nike crowning the obverse bust, which also lacks the forehead wart and, on the drachms, by his wearing the usual spiral torque. For the Ecbatana silver (pl. 6 (3)) and also for some of the tetradrachms we see a Nike both before and behind the royal effigy. After Phraataces' union with

[1] de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies arsacides surfrappées", p. 174; see now B. Simonetta, "Sulla monetazione di Fraate IV e di Tiridate II di Parthia", *RIN* LXXVIII (1976), pp. 19–34.

Musa, the queen's portrait forms the reverse type and the normal drachm inscription is ΘΕΑC ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑC ΜΟΥCΗC ΒΑCΙΛΙCCΗC "[the coin] of the goddess Urania Musa, Queen" (pl. 6 (4, 5)).

Indifferent as it may have been to matrimonial eccentricity,[1] the Parthian nobility was always watchful of its feudal interests and apparently believing that these were now being infringed, deposed Phraataces and Musa. In their stead was elected Orodes III, who struck a few tetradrachms of the standard type (pl. 6 (6)), dated A.D. 6. It was, of course, axiomatic that a candidate put forward by one faction would be unacceptable to others; stigmatized with the almost hackneyed charge of "cruelty", Orodes was assassinated. The Romans were then requested to nominate as king one of the sons of Phraates IV, who had been living exiled in Italy. Eventually Vonones I arrived. His upbringing is revealed by the drachm portraits (pl. 6 (8)), which have a short Roman hair style. Vonones further flouted Parthian numismatic tradition by putting his name – ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΟΝΩΝΗC – on the obverse, while the reverse, instead of carrying the time-hallowed archer, depicts Nike surrounded by the inscription ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΟΝΩΝΗC ΝΕΙΚΗCΑC ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΝ, "king Vonones, conqueror of Artabanos". Similar types were employed for the tetradrachms (pl. 6 (7), often overstruck on specimens of earlier reigns. The Artabanus whose defeat is commemorated by these unconventional designs was an Arsacid through his mother and ruled in Media Atropatene. The western habits acquired by Vonones soon disgusted his supporters and Artabanus' second revolt swept Vonones from Parthia.

The successful rebel dissociated himself from occidental aberrations by adopting the nomadic long hair style for his portrait on all denominations (pl. 6 (9)). Apparently aggrieved by the attitude of the Greeks of his empire, Artabanus also pointedly omitted any reference to his friendship for them on his later tetradrachms which read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ, "Of the king of kings, Arsaces, the beneficent". The corresponding reverse design depicts the enthroned king with a suppliant kneeling before him, a motif repeated on the base metal "drachms" from Susa (pl. 6 (12)). Towards the end of his reign, the tetradrachms (pl. 6 (10)) give us a frontal view of Arabanus, possibly recalling his Atropatenean origin. Numerous

[1] Next-of-kin marriages were considered meritorious in pre-Islamic Iran and were practised by the royal house; see M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices* (London, 1979), pp. 53–4, 97, 111.]

insurrections disrupted Artabanus' rule in Mesopotamia and in the face of these he would withdraw to the Parthian heartland. Here affairs were more stable and commerce prospered, a deduction drawn from the vast drachm issues (pl. 6 (11)) of Artabanus' final years. This group has the same square bearded profile bust as the coinage from Susa, dated A.D. 28,[1] while the associated bronzes exist in almost bewildering variety – examples of reverse designs include a bust of the queen, an amphora and a pomegranate – and a resumption of annual types may be possible (pl. 7 (1)).[2]

In spite of the Arsacid domination of Mesopotamia since the days of Mithradates I, Seleucia had been permitted the privilege of its own bronze coinage. These issues, struck for two centuries, usually carry a representation of the Tyche of the city (pl. 7 (2)) and range in weight from 20 grammes[3] to less than one gramme. With the anti-Hellenic attitude of Artabanus II and his successors, it is no surprise that henceforth (except during periods of overt rebellion) the royal bust is always the main feature on Seleucia bronze, Tyche being relegated to a subordinate place. Most are dated and one series has been used to postulate a Nīsān start for the Arsacid year;[4] the numismatic reasoning is impeccable but extrapolation to the whole of the Parthian coinage seems unwarranted, the tetradrachms indicating the contrary.

Seleucia was in revolt before the death of Artabanus, *c.* A.D. 38, and the coins of his son, Vardanes I, only begin in A.D. 42. The tetradrachms are of standard designs, the obverse portrait carrying a forehead wart. On the drachms (pl. 7 (3)), this disfigurement is represented by three thin lines. It is probable that at this time Arsacid control over both Susa and Khurāsān was slackened, since the last Parthian drachms attributable to these areas are those of Vardanes. Further, from about 80 B.C. minor kings in eastern Iran had countermarked Parthian drachms for circulation in their own territory; to increment the supply, imitations of official Arsacid coins were fabricated especially for countermarking; again, the drachms of Vardanes are the last to be so copied (pl. 7 (4)).

From the start of his reign, Vardanes was opposed by his brother Gotarzes II and their tetradrachms overlap in date. On this denomination Gotarzes is depicted with a lock of hair on his forehead (pl. 7 (5)), while his drachms (pl. 7 (6)) much resemble those of his father, Arta-

[1] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 116.
[2] Prof J. Brindley, a private communication.
[3] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 157.
[4] McDowell, *Coins from Seleucia*, p. 149.

banus, but are distinctive for a horizontal line on the brow.[1] A few rare specimens bear his name in full – ΒΑCΛΙΕΥC ΒΑCΛΙΕΩΝ [*sic*] ΑΡCΑΚΟΥ ΥΟC ΚΕΚΑΛΟΥΜΕΝΟC ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΥ ΓΩΤΕΡΖΗC, "The king of kings, Arsaces, called the son of Artabanus, Goterzes" (?). (Note the confusion in the use of the nominative and genitive cases), (pl. 7 (7)). The murder of Vardanes in A.D. 45 did not free Gotarzes from competition and in Iran he may soon afterwards have been superseded by Vonones II, another monarch from Atropatene, whose full face portrait on drachms (pl. 7 (8)) and bronze wears a tiara like that of Darius (pl. 4 (3)). Vonones probably never really controlled Mesopotamia, since the issues of Gotarzes from Seleucia end in A.D. 51 and are followed after only a few month's gap by the tetradrachms of Vologases I, thought to be another son of Artabanus II.

In typical Arsacid fashion, Vologases faced filial revolt, his son Vardanes II issuing both drachms (pl. 7 (10)) and tetradrachms (pl. 7 (9)) between A.D. 56 and 58. In the end Vologases I regained power and his later coinage (pl. 7 (11)) has dates running from A.D. 60 to 78. During this period the drachms provide evidence of the abandonment of Greek as the official language of the plateau. Their inscription has become so formalized as to be barely recognizable, and hence, when Vologases required to differentiate his issues from those of a rival, he placed the Parthian letters *wl* (see Appendix 2) on the obverse (pl. 7 (12)), occasionally substituting the Arsacid family symbol ♀ (pl. 7 (13)).

In Iran proper this rival was Pacorus II, the identity of whose beardless portrait (pl. 8 (3)) is assured because some drachms carry *pk* in Parthian. However, at Seleucia the mint next struck bronze and tetradrachms (pl. 8 (1)) for Vologases II. On the silver we meet two changes. Firstly the personal name ΟΛΑΓΑCΟΥ replaces ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ on the reverse. Secondly, a sequence letter (from A to E)[2] is placed on the obverse. On all denominations Vologases wears a tiara ornamented with "hooks" and the drachms have the additional Parthian *wl* (pl. 8 (2)). Dated tetradrachms show a continuous conflict for two years between Pacorus and Vologases, concluded with the disappearance of Vologases. Into the latter's shoes stepped Artabanus III, for whom we know tetradrachms carrying his personal name (pl. 8 (4)). The resemblance of this denomination to the issues of Artabanus II has enabled us also to attribute to Artabanus III a series

[1] Sellwood, "A Die Engraver sequence", p. 16.
[2] Sellwood, "The Parthian New Year", p. 155.

of drachms (pl. 8 (5)) distinguished from those of his namesake by the idiosyncrasies of the later die engraver.[1]

Artabanus III held out for less than a year, A.D. 80, in Mesopotamia, after which Pacorus II recommenced minting tetradrachms (pl. 8 (6)) that present us with one of the few examples of irony in numismatics. Tyche offering a diadem to the enthroned monarch is the standard reverse type of later Arsacid tetradrachms, but Artabanus III had introduced a variation by showing her holding an untied diadem (cf. pl. 8 (4)). As just mentioned, Artabanus II provided the prototypes for the coinage of Artabanus III and so may have been related to him. Now the latest of the tetradrachms of Artabanus II (cf. pl. 6 (10)) have the king on horseback, not enthroned. In mocking commentary, therefore, Pacorus is depicted on horseback, receiving a normal diadem from Tyche and an untied diadem from a male figure, presumably the defeated Artabanus. Both the tetradrachms and the parallel drachms (pl. 8 (7)) depict the issuer with a close-cropped beard. For his final coinage, running up to A.D. 96, Pacorus adopted the tiara worn by Vologases II (pl. 8 (8)), even recutting some of his rival's dies for his own use.[2]

For the next twenty-five years no tetradrachms were struck at Seleucia and the evident slackening of trade there may coincide with a clash of arms over the succession. However, some bronze from Seleucia, beginning in A.D. 105/6, and a plentiful supply of drachms from the plateau are to be attributed to a new prince, Vologases III.[3] The bare-headed bust of the drachms (pl. 8 (9)) was replaced at Seleucia in A.D. 110/111 by one wearing a tiara and this bust is used on Vologases III's tetradrachms which run from A.D. 122 to 146 (pl. 9 (1)). His main rival was Osroes I whose portrait is distinctive for the bunched hair-style later characteristic of the Sasanians (pl. 8 (10)). For upwards of two decades, A.D. 109 to 129, these monarchs, turn and turn about, ruled in Seleucia, from whose mint their dated coins emanated, but Osroes has no tetradrachms and so, finally, he may have been subject to Vologases.

From the western viewpoint, such political ferment merely formed a convenient background to Trajan's expedition. One result of this was the investiture in Mesopotamia of a satellite king, Parthamaspates, son of Osroes I. Only drachms (pl. 8 (11)) and bronze have been allocated to this young prince,[4] and they must come from Iran, but it is possible

[1] Sellwood, "A Die Engraver sequence", p. 21.
[2] Sellwood, *ibid.*, p. 20.
[3] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 178.
[4] Lindsay, p. 172, no. 114; Sellwood, "A Die Engraver sequence", p. 22.

that he maintained himself there until translated to another throne by Hadrian. The drachms (pl. 8 (12)) of a further interloper, Mithradates IV, indicate clearly how far the plateau had now (*c.* A.D. 140) drifted from Greek cultural hegemony, since on the reverse we read *mtrdt MLK'* "king Mithradates" in Parthian (see App. 2). Minor diadem differences separate the obverse portrait of both this and another unnamed usurper (pl. 9 (2)) from that of Vologases III.[1]

In both major parts of the empire, the next reign was that of Vologases IV, whose dated tetradrachms (pl. 9 (3)) span without a break the years A.D. 147 to 191. During this time the spelling of the personal name changed from ΟΛΑΓΑCΟΥ to ΟΛΟΓΑCΟΥ and the flan size became increasingly too small to take the full die impression so that the exergual month date is often missing. Parthian script continued to be used on the drachms (pl. 9 (4)) which read *wlgšy MLK'*. For both denominations the obverse bust wears a tiara with a neckflap. It is often supposed that the sack of Seleucia and Ctesiphon by the Romans under the nominal leadership of Verus must have wrought havoc with the economic life of Parthia but there is no numismatic evidence to support this view. Coins from all parts of the reign are equally common.

However, towards its end, *c.* 190 B.C., Vologases appears to have been supplanted in Iran by Osroes II; the latter is known only from his drachms which are of a hard linear style and on which the Parthian script has been tentatively interpreted as *ḥwsrw MLK'* (pl. 9 (5)).[2] These exist in much greater numbers than do the drachms (pl. 9 (8)) of the next king, Vologases V, whose Seleucia issues (pl. 9 (7)) include a few tetradrachms also with the facing bust (pl. 9 (6)); they date from A.D. 191 to 207/8. Arsacid support for the unsuccessful Pescennius Niger drew the destructive wrath of Severus and his legions upon Mesopotamia. Whatever the immediate effect, the coinage of Vologases VI, the next prince, is profuse enough to indicate thriving trade. The tetradrachms (pl. 9 (9)) begin in A.D. 207/8 and end with an isolated issue in A.D. 227/8. The drachms are now very far from Greek prototypes, and often foreshadow the artistry so evident on early Sasanian issues. The bent neckflap seen on one or two drachms (pl. 9 (10)) testifies to the pliable and non-protective nature of the tiara, often described as a helmet.

The contemptible Caracalla attempted to embroil Vologases VI with

[1] Sellwood, *ibid.*, p. 24.

[2] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 40. I would like to thank Dr A. D. H. Bivar for this reference.

his brother Artabanus IV[1] and it may be as a result that Artabanus struck a group of drachms (pl. 9 (11)) and bronze contemporary with the issues of Vologases, an obvious enough declaration of independence. The obverse bust has a forked beard[2] and behind the head on the drachms is *'r* (*Ar*), while the reverse reads *'rtbnw MLK'*. (The former attribution to a putative Artavasdes is no longer tenable.)[3] A "mule", obverse Vologases, reverse Artabanus, establishes the synchronism of the issues. Some rare coins of Artabanus (pl. 9 (12)) have a new tiara decorated on the side with a star and were perhaps struck in answer to the challenge of Ardashīr, the first Sasanian prince, whose tiara is similarly ornamented. In fact, while Artabanus perished in battle, Vologases may have escaped temporarily from captivity[4] to be responsible for the tetradrachm of A.D. 227/8, the last Parthian coin.

[1] [Artabanus V according to a different reckoning; see p. 94 n 1 and pp. 684ff.]

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pl. 70. [Cf. p. 96, above.]

[3] Henning, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Sellwood, "A Die Engraver sequence", p. 26; Simonetta, "Vologese V, Artabano V e Artavasde", p. 19.

[4] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 10.

CHAPTER 8(*b*)

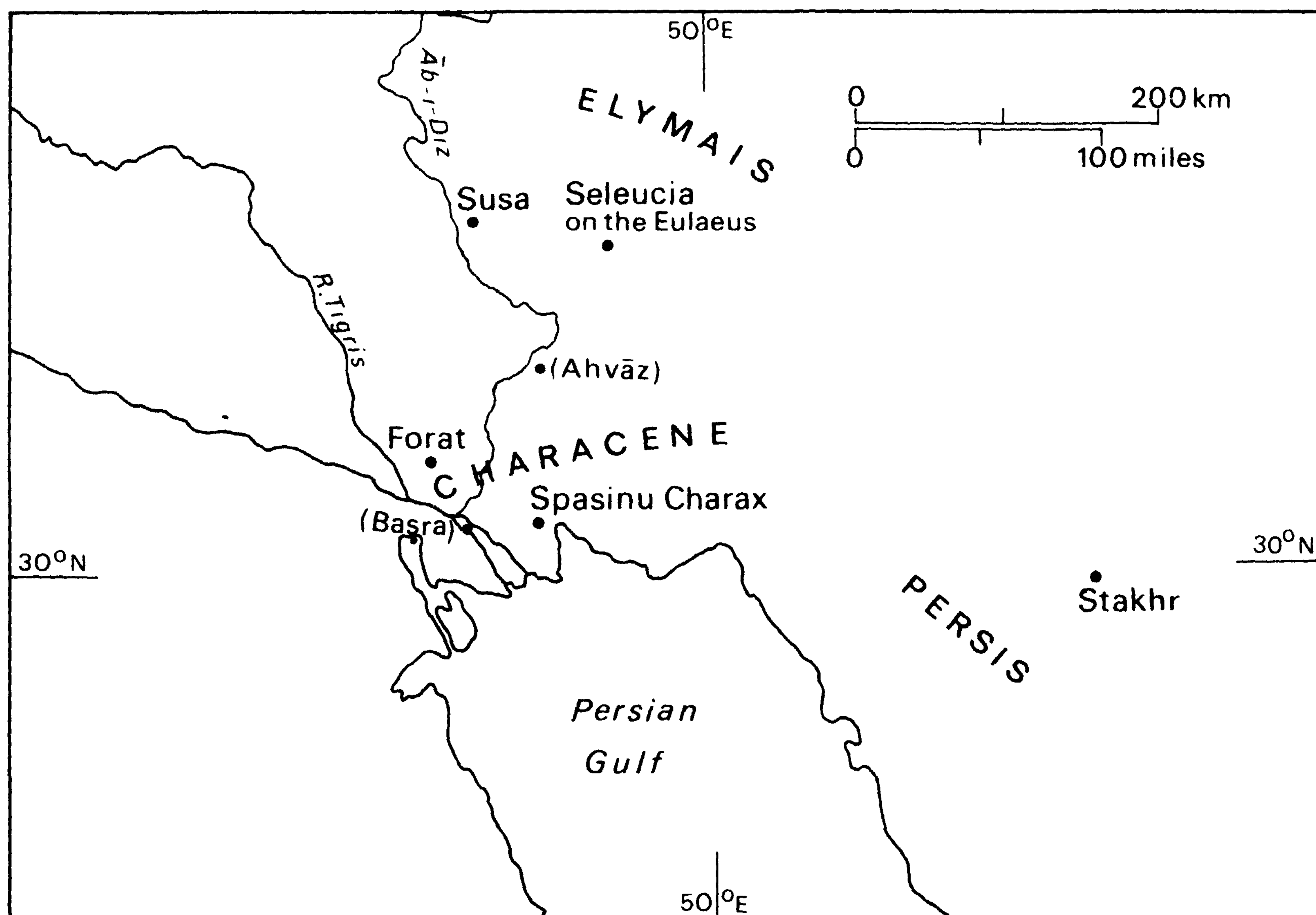
MINOR STATES IN SOUTHERN IRAN

The student of Iranian history may well question the necessity for this detailed treatment of the numismatics of the smaller states existing in the shadow of the Arsacid empire. For Parthia itself, although we have numerous enough references in the Greek and Roman authors, yet the coins are of great help in establishing the broad outline of political events. When we turn to the minor dynasties of Persis, Elymais and Characene, other sources fail us almost completely and we have to rely on the relevant coinage not only for the very names of the kings, but even for epigraphical data and evidence of artistic trends. Indeed, attempts to reconcile the unquestionable facts presented by the coins with the fragmentary and often dubious testimony from elsewhere usually raise more problems than they solve.

PERSIS

Of the three kingdoms mentioned above, Persis, the modern province of Fārs, was the least accessible geographically to invasion from either Mesopotamia or northern Iran. It had once been the cradle of the Achaemenian race and the imperial traditions were never forgotten even after the shock of Alexander's occupation. A few tetradrachms and drachms were struck at Persepolis by Seleucus I, but Hellenistic supremacy, which can never have extended far beyond the main lines of communication, soon lapsed in the area. The advantages of a standard currency as opposed to bullion were obvious enough, though, and so local rulers continued to maintain a mint when the Greeks were gone.

The date of this departure is quite uncertain. It may well have been in the reign of Antiochus I (280–261 B.C.), since even the early Seleucids were chiefly concerned with protecting the trade route to Bactria and further Asia, a route running through Media. Equally imprecise is the period of issue and, indeed, the identity of the first coinage of Persis. The tetradrachms, drachms (pl. 10 (1)) and fractions attributed to Bagadat are generally regarded as initiating the series. Being significantly different in types and fabric from the rest of the early Persid



Map 7. Persis, Elymais and Characene.

coinage, they either precede or succeed it and on stylistic grounds they seem closest to those struck by the Seleucid kings. Their date we shall consider later.

The obverse head, with its short beard, faces right and wears the satrapal *bashlyk*, familiar from Achaemenian issues and bound with the diadem; the chin-strap is taken up over the forehead. On the reverse the king is enthroned left, holding a long sceptre and a flower; this scene is almost identical with the famous representation of Darius at Persepolis, and if, as seems probable, the coinage was struck here, the engraver would have had his model readily to hand. In any case, such an overt reference to the former dynasty proclaims Bagadat's independence from the usurping foreigners. Returning to the reverse design, we find a tasselled "standard" planted before the king, while around is the Aramaic inscription *bgdt prtrk' zy 'lhy'*[1] (see App. 2, p. 317). The vowels in the royal name being, of course, omitted in this script, they have to be inferred from contemporary Greek transliterations or similar

[1] [Aramaic words are transcribed in the lower case when it is assumed that they were meant to be read as such. They are transcribed in the upper case when it is assumed that they were "read off" in an Iranian language. It appears that Aramaic became more or less ideographic by about 200 B.C.]

sources, and "Bagadat" is only a probable expansion. *Prataraka*, a title associated with some official position, is known from the Elephantine parchments, but has not been fully explained.[1] *Zy alahia* "of the gods" has a later parallel in the protocol of the Sasanian dynasty.[2]

The metrology of the coinage derived, as did that of the Parthians, from the Attic system employed by the Seleucids and was based on the silver drachm of about four grammes. The inaccuracy inherent in hand-striking techniques makes it difficult to be sure of the intended value of some of the smaller fractions, but they certainly included the obol and the triobol (or hemidrachm). The introduction of unwonted decimal divisions such as the fifth of a drachm, proposed by some scholars,[3] seems hardly warranted. Neither now nor later do we find gold or copper issues in the Persid series. If gold were required at all, the coins remaining in circulation from the Achaemenid or Seleucid epochs probably sufficed. The absence of base metal denominations emphasizes the restriction of the use of currency to the upper classes; such trade as there was amongst the mass of the population was no doubt carried on by barter, while silver only passed through its hands in the way of taxes. A similar situation is found in medieval Europe, whose feudal system Iran anticipated in so many other respects.

We next come to a prince whose issues read *wḥwbrz prtrk' zy 'lhy'* "Oborzos, prataraka, of the gods", the Greek form of his name being Oborzos, as we learn from an undatable reference.[4] They comprise the same range of denominations – tetradrachms (pl. 10 (2)) to obols – as those of Bagadat, but their fabric is markedly different, being excessively concave on the reverse and correspondingly convex on the obverse. The reason for such an unusual shape is not clear. On some Byzantine coins it seems to have been adopted to permit easy distinction between issues of varying weights, but here it may be connected with the source of the blanks. Many of the tetradrachms (pl. 10 (4)) of this and subsequent reigns are overstruck on the posthumously minted silver of Alexander the Great, traces of the undertypes remaining; the force required to distort the blanks would ensure more effective effacement of the original designs. The obverse carries the royal head wearing the bashlyk still, but now the chin-strap partly covers the mouth and is

[1] See Naster, p. 74, for a full discussion; F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Geschichte Mittelasiens im Altertum* (Berlin, 1970), p. 504.

[2] See p. 330. Ed.

[3] E.g. de Morgan, *Manuel*, pp. 280, 282.

[4] R. Stiehl in F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* I (Berlin, 1959), 376.

perhaps intended in this position to prevent the king's breath from defiling the flame honouring Ahura Mazda.[1] A representation of Oborzos in his capacity as chief priest is engraved on the reverse dies. He stands, hand raised in adoration, before a temple surmounted by three fires (for the priests, the soldiers and the peasants?). The "standard" is set up on the other side of the temple. The same scene also occurs on some of the coins of Bagadat, and there is yet another link between his issues and those of Oborzos; this is the use of a further unexplained word, *bgkrt* (?), and *frd* (?) respectively, in the reverse legend; these may be the names of their fathers.[2]

Striking coins of the same fabric and designs and probably succeeding Oborzos were *ḥrtḥčtr* (Artaxerxes I) and *wtprdt* (Autophradates I) (pl. 10 (3–6)). On some of these, a winged figure of Ahura Mazda floats above the temple; again, his effigy stems directly from the Persepolis reliefs. At the same time, Greek influence is attested by the Nike who stands behind the priest-king, holding a wreath over his head.

A small hoard containing single tetradrachms of Seleucus I and Bagadat, with eight of Autophradates I, is our sole external indication of the date of all the coins so far discussed.[3] On grounds of style, design and fabric we may postulate issue during the 3rd century B.C.; and further, since Antiochus III was apparently as successful in Persis as he had been in Parthia, we may assume that this first Persid coinage also ceased about 205 B.C. Its commencement (with Bagadat?) is more difficult to establish, but the four reigns involved perhaps extended over several decades so that 250 B.C. is possible but by no means proven.[4]

The coins so far described correspond with the slow rebirth of Iranian independence from the regime imposed by the Diadochi, Seleucus I and Antiochus I in particular. In language and script, the local population and their scribes ostentatiously preserved an island of Achaemenian-based culture in a shallow sea of imperfectly appreciated Hellenism. Continuity with the past was confirmed by the choice of such evocative royal names as Artaxerxes. Stakhr, the chief city of Persis and sited only a few kilometres from the recently ravaged palaces of Persepolis, was, as we have said, likely to be the mint responsible for the striking of these issues and remained so whatever

[1] Hinnells, illustration on p. 124.

[2] Mint names have also been suggested; see Altheim and Stiehl, *op. cit.*, p. 566.

[3] Noe, p. 212, no. 807.

[4] There may have been a later Greek presence, since the nominal satrap of Persis revolted against Antiochus III in 223 B.C. (Polybius v. 40. 7).

the vicissitudes to which the ruling dynasty was subjected. The great blocks of squared masonry, quarried from nearby outcrops in the Zagros and so characteristic of the architecture of Cyrus and his successors, continued to be employed in Persid buildings; these are familiar from their numismatic representations and from traces we can still observe on the ground. Their stern grandeur contrasts strongly with the impermanent mud-brick structures typical of Mesopotamia under Seleucid and, later on, Parthian influence. Indeed, reaction to external pressure sometimes took more violent forms. The prince of the "Oborzos" coins may also have been the instigator of a massacre of the local Macedonian garrison, although, such was the fratricidal bent of the occupying forces, he perhaps only assisted one faction against another. Contemporary glimpses of political affairs in Persis are otherwise completely lacking.

There is now a gap in the issues of Persis corresponding to that in the Arsacid series anterior to Mithradates I, and doubtless the Seleucid princes supplied the currency for the whole area once more. The Roman victory at Magnesia spelt freedom for Iran, and autonomous minting was perhaps resumed soon after 190 B.C. The next group from Persis represents a break with the previous classes in respect both of style and fabric. No longer scyphate, the coins are now relatively dumpy and flat on both sides. The obverse bust wears a completely new style of bashlyk, resembling the Macedonian *kausia*, but with a flap at the back and an eagle on top. On early examples (pl. 10 (8)) the style is charmingly naturalistic and the relief is high. The reverse is similar to that used for the coins of Autophradates I, a battlemented temple, with Ahura Mazda above, the king at the left and a standard serving as a perch for a bird at the right. The denominations range from the tetradrachm (for the last time) (pl. 10 (7)) to the obol and almost all are anepigraphic. One drachm (pl. 10 (9)), however, carries the Aramaic *šykndt*, a name not known hitherto, but acceptably Iranian.[1] As the issue progressed the delicacy of style decreased while an additional crescent was affixed to the bashlyk flap.

The next reign belongs to Darius I. His coinage of drachms (pl. 10 (10)) and fractions, continues the general pattern just described, but with a few modifications of the bashlyk decorations. On the reverse we see *d'ryw MLK'* "Darius the king" or some longer indecipherable

[1] A suggestion I owe to Dr A. D. H. Bivar; see F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), *s.v.* Šikan, p. 301; another possibility is Farandat, p. 91.

word. The assumption of kingship seems to coincide with the initial use of the equivalent ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on the coins of the Arsacid Mithradates I, the first occasion for which any Parthian influence on the affairs of Persis can be postulated.

Such influence becomes more obvious with the portraits of the succeeding prince, Autophradates II (*wtprdt MLK'*), who is depicted with the same bare head (pl. 10 (11)) that we see on the later issues of Mithradates I, although a crescent is precariously and incongruously attached above the diadem. This crescent, borrowed from the kausia of Darius I, came to be the symbol of the monarchs of Persis and often reappeared. By now the Arsacids had overrun Mesopotamia and were about to occupy Persis as well. Local coinage apparently ceased in approximately 140 B.C., and the later very common drachms of Mithradates II must have formed the currency of the area until this king found himself in difficulties towards the end of his reign. About this time the grandiose Arsacid title "king of kings" was relinquished to Tigranes of Armenia, and the resumption of striking by the rulers of Persis, *c.* 90 B.C., may be just one manifestation of more complete freedom. Nevertheless, Parthian numismatic conventions were now paramount.

On his coins, the next prince, Darius II, faces left and wears a tiara reminiscent of that introduced by Mithradates II, decorated on the side with a crescent; on more carefully engraved dies his flowing hair is seen to be covered at the neck by delicately fashioned metal plates, a foretaste of the superior craftsmanship in the armourer's trade that would supply the Sasanian cavalry's elegant protection (pl. 10 (12)). For the reverse type, the king stands, sword in hand, before a fire-altar; around him is ranged the square, Parthian-style, inscription *d'ryw MLK' BRḤ wtprdt*; the third word, meaning "his son", heralds the definitive adoption of heterographic Aramaic writing, and it may well be that Darius was the son of that Autophradates of the period before Mithradates II.

It will be recalled that, after the latter's death, there is, on Arsacid issues, a new hair fashion which conceals the ear; such an innovation we find duplicated on those of Oxathres, Darius' son, where the legend runs *wḥwḥštr MLK' BRḤ d'ryw MLK'* (pl. 11 (1)). One or two of these drachms have a monogram behind the obverse head, a practice followed much more regularly by his brother Artaxerxes II (*'rtḥštr MLK' BRḤ d'ryw MLK'*) (pl. 11 (2)). This monarch wears a battlemented

crown, derived perhaps from the form of the altar or temple employed earlier and certainly a seminal contribution to the iconography of the Sasanian dynasty. Many of the drachms of Artaxerxes have been struck on thin flans made by beating out flat existing coins. Overstriking is, of course, prevalent in the Parthian series and its occurrence in Persis may portend a further diminution of Arsacid control, even though the king in question was a contemporary of those powerful princes Orodes II and Phraates IV. Again, however, the fabric points towards the one so typical of the thin Sasanian issues.

With the coins of the following king, Namupat, the inscription *nmwp't MLK' BRḤ 'rtḥ* "Namupat, the king, son of Artaxerxes" takes up a circular outline more conformable to the shape of the flans, although in other respects they derive obviously enough from preceding issues. Some fractions of the drachm carry an unusual reverse design which has been interpreted as a conventional representation of the diadem (pl. 11 (3)). Here we have yet another demonstration, if such were needed, of the esteem accorded to this symbol of royalty in Iran.

From Namupat to the advent of Ardashīr I it is increasingly difficult to draw analogies between the issues of Persis and those of other states where some chronological framework can be established. Accordingly, we can only deduce the sequence of monarchs from stylistic – and therefore to some extent, subjective – considerations, but we are helped by evidence of kinship recorded in the coin legends. The immediate successors of Namupat include Pacorus (*pkwr MLK' BRḤ wḥwḥ*) (pl. 11 (4)) and Kapāt (*kp't MLK' BRḤ nmwpt*) (pl. 11 (5)); probably these are the sons of the two kings, Namupat and Oxathres, reigning earlier. The name Kapāt is no doubt merely another form of Kavād, who appears in the Sasanian king-list. We then come to yet further departures in types, where the reverse depicts a smaller royal head, assumed to be that of the father of the issuer, himself portrayed in grander fashion on the other side. Thus Artaxerxes III (*'rtḥštr MLK'*) (pl. 11 (6)) is coupled with Mithra (*mtry MLK'*) who is diademed and, additionally, radiate (implying posthumous deification?). Equally Manuchihr (*mnčtry MLK'*) has a forebear sharing his name (pl. 11 (7)); a second Manuchihr seems indicated by a change of portrait (pl. 11 (8)). The next prince, Artaxerxes IV (*'rtḥšt MLK'*), is son of a Manuchihr and he has an elaborate coiffure, prefiguring the creations of the Sasanian hairdressers (pl. 11 (9)); in fact, the following issues were struck for Ardashīr, first prince of the dynasty of Sāsān.

After the period of Parthian expansion, the kingdom of Persis had become submerged in a loosely organized system often owing merely nominal allegiance to the Arsacids. The internal struggles for power which so often laid the Parthian empire open to invasion by the Romans had little direct effect on Persis itself; this lack of contact with the Mediterranean world has unfortunately curtailed our knowledge of most aspects of Persid history. Later writers continually emphasize the antipathy of the Sasanians to anything deriving from the Parthians. Such an attitude is understandable in Ardashīr, but even he had to build his nascent state on Arsacid foundations with the help of other leading Iranian families, themselves sympathetic to and often promoted by the Arsacids. However, we find no alteration with ensuing generations, so it may be that the Parthians exercised a harsher and more arbitrary control over their sub-kings than we realize; maladroit in permitting the success of Ardashīr it must have been. Familiar as he thus was with the inefficiency of the Parthian administration in its latter days, Ardashīr greatly extended the scope of centralized authority, and in this he may well have drawn on the experience of his predecessors in Persis itself.

ELYMAIS

The ancient state of Elam had always maintained diplomatic and cultural relations with the successive dynasties ruling in Mesopotamia. Then, as now, the road through Ahvāz traversed Elymais and constituted one of the main arteries of trade, linking the head of the Persian Gulf with the plateau of Iran. Originally only mountain brigands, the people of Elymais had, long before Alexander's incursion, descended to the plain of the Āb-i-Diz, where they effectively practised the agriculture learnt from their western neighbours; at the same time, worship of their goddess Nanaia prompted them to the construction and upkeep of increasingly imposing temple complexes, especially at Susa, which although it often pretended to autonomy, falls within the geographical confines of Elymais.

Apart from unexceptionable initiatives such as the installation of a mint at Susa, the earlier Seleucid monarchs were careful of offending local susceptibilities. This sensitivity was lacking in their descendants. Antiochus III, for long the greatest prince of the Hellenistic world, had lost most of his power to the Romans after the battle of Magnesia,

c. 190 B.C.; whilst trying to restore his finances by plundering the shrine of Nanaia, he perished at the hands of the Elymaeans two years later. His death and the subsequent internecine struggles of the Greeks, severely curtailed Seleucid influence in the whole area east of Mesopotamia and relaxed the pressure on the local Elymaean kinglets, giving one of them, Hyknapses, an opportunity to assert himself about 162 B.C., when he issued a bronze coinage. This is entirely Hellenistic in style with a beardless head radiate on the obverse and Apollo set in a Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΥΚΝΑΨΟΥ "of the king Hyknapses" on the reverse.[1] Evidently this rebellion was short-lived, and only after that ineffectual usurper, Alexander Balas, was forced to withdraw from the province, *c.* 147 B.C., do we find another separatist gesture. This was much more positive, since its author, Kamnaskires I, struck not only bronze, but also silver tetradrachms (pl. 11 (10, 11)), although these again follow Seleucid prototypes.[2]

Once more Elymaean aspirations were crushed, this time by the Parthian hegemony, established initially under Mithradates I, *c.* 140 B.C. The Arsacid monarchs, in their turn, found continuous occupation by no means easy, and another local ruler, Tigraios, was able to strike a base-metal coinage for about six years from 138 B.C.[3] It was at this juncture that the Seleucid Demetrius II enlisted Elymaean assistance in his fruitless efforts to counter Arsacid expansionism. Thereafter, the Parthians continued with an almost unbroken series of bronze or silver issues from the Susa mint down to about A.D. 45. It seems that at some periods, as ingeniously deduced by Le Rider, the reverse designs were altered annually, a bureaucratic convenience that enables chronological limits to be suggested for some reigns.[4]

By now Susa itself had become so imbued with Greek ideas that it was scarcely suitable as a residence for Elymaean kings. In the aftermath of the reign of Mithradates II, when Parthia was eclipsed by Armenia, autonomous issues of Elymais were struck elsewhere, probably at Seleucia on the Hedyphon. Still clearly influenced by earlier designs, such as those of Demetrius and Laodice, these coins carry on the obverse the jugate busts of Kamnaskires II and his consort, Anzaze, while behind their heads is an anchor-like symbol (pl. 11 (12)). The latter resembles one of the dynastic insignia of the Seleucids, but is also

[1] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 347.
[2] At this time the name is spelt ΚΑΜΝΙΣΚΙΡΟΥ or ΚΑΜΝΙΣΚΕΙΡΟΥ.
[3] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 379.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 395.

associated with a deity from Susa.[1] On the reverse of this series, which includes silver denominations running from the tetradrachm to the obol, we meet Zeus Nikephoros, with an inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΑΝΖΑΖΗΣ "of the king Kamnaskires and the queen Anzaze" and as subsidiary features, the Seleucid date ΑΛΣ (82–81 B.C.) with the magistrate's (?) name ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝ.

In line with Parthian precedents, the contemporary rulers of Elymais appear all to have adopted the throne-name Kamnaskires. The next monarch has a more conventional coinage with a single obverse bust and on the reverse the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΓ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ "of the king Kamnaskires and the king Kamnaskires"; the precise implication of the fourth word has not been elucidated. A drachm (pl. 12 (1)) of this general type, dated 65–64 B.C., has a horse protome replacing the "anchor" on the obverse.[2] Here, the symbolism of the Elymaean issues seems to have inspired the Arsacid mints to adopt similar practices, especially during the reigns of Orodes II and Phraates IV.

Under the same two monarchs, the Parthian mint at Susa instituted a wholesale debasement of the silver drachm strikings; this affected the Kamnaskirid series which, from the tetradrachms downwards, dwindled into a mere token bronze coinage (pl. 12 (3)). Lack of die-cutting skill no doubt contributed to the displacement of the relatively complex figure of Zeus on the reverse by a simple head of a deity (or former ruler?). The inscription, too, became utterly meaningless, and eventually, at the start of the 1st century A.D., the complete reverse was reduced to a field of randomly disseminated dashes. Such a paucity of Greek at the mint striking these issues confirms the view that it must have been somewhere other than Susa, for here at this time quite respectable Greek poetry was being composed and edicts in the same language were being cut correctly enough in stone.[3] Although several princes must have been responsible for the coins just discussed, the slow descent into incoherence is so unbroken that attempts to provide attributions can only be nugatory.

The last Parthian coins from Susa are assigned to Vardanes I, *c.* A.D. 45, a date giving us a convenient *terminus post quem* for a new Elymaean series.[4] Judging by the names used, the line of Kamnaskires

[1] Hill, "The coinage", p. 404.

[2] A personal observation from Dr J. Hansman.

[3] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 35.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 425.

was now superseded by a junior branch of the Arsacids. The two denominations struck correspond in weight to tetradrachms (14 grammes) and drachms (3.5 grammes) but they continued to be of base metal. While the larger of these carry only an Aramaic legend, some of the drachms bear an inscription in poorly engraved and often retrograde Greek. Le Rider has made the illuminating suggestion that the former were struck at Seleucia on the Hedyphon and were intended to circulate in Elymais proper, whereas the latter perhaps emanated from Susa itself.[1]

The obverses naturally continue to depict the royal bust, sometimes turned to the left and on others, facing. A tiara of the form introduced by Mithradates II is often worn and its decorations include either a crescent or an "anchor" – this same symbol is frequently placed in the field, too. The hair and beard styles adopted are unusual, not to say exotic. Reverses vary considerably; many retain the irregular set of dashes, but others have more significant designs such as a head of Artemis, together with appropriate inscriptions, for example ΠΡΑΑΤΗϹ ΒΑϹΙΛΕΥϹ "of the king Phraates" or *kbnḥkyr wrwd MLK' BRY wrwd* "Kamnaskires-Orodes the king, son of Orodes" in a heterographic derivative of Aramaic (see App. 2, p. 317). The accepted sequence of these princes is Orodes I (pl. 12 (4)), Kamnaskires-Orodes II (pl. 12 (9–11)), Phraates (pl. 12 (5–8)) and Chosroes. The latter is often assumed to be that Osroes who was the Arsacid opponent of Trajan, and certainly the portraits on the two series of coins are sufficiently close to argue in favour of the theory. By accepting it we bring the coinage of Elymais up to *c.* A.D. 120.

The succeeding issues consist of "drachms" only, their weight occasionally dropping below two grammes. Stylistically they resemble the ones we have just considered, and although many are anepigraphic (pl. 12 (13, 14)) others bear the obverse legend *wrwd MLK'*. One type also carries *wlp'n* accompanying a beardless reverse head; Ulpan or Ulfan is not a recognizably Iranian name, but it may be that of the queen of this particular Orodes (pl. 12 (12)). The very last Elymaean group (pl. 12 (15)) has an obverse head to the right and was possibly struck under the impending shadow of the Sasanian revolt. Again, the nature of the numismatic evidence, all that we possess, precludes our drawing up a meaningful king-list.

During the later stages of the period under discussion, a gradual

[1] *Ibid.* p. 426.

change occurred in the reverses of the Elymaean coinage. Under the example of Seleucid issues these had included effigies of Greek deities such as Apollo, Zeus and Artemis. However, such designs were either dropped altogether or metamorphosed by insensible steps into characteristically Iranian ones, Nanaia especially. We may suspect that this process mirrors a general and natural reversion to other aspects of national culture and religion, upon which Hellenism was no more than an ephemeral patination. As for the limits of political control, Susa was recognized as of continuing importance, and Arsacid authority was intermittently re-established. Thus we have from the French excavations there, a rock-relief implying Parthian suzerainty even under the last Artabanus. On the other hand, Ahvāz was captured by Ardashīr from an "Orodes", presumably a local dynast and the ultimate scion of Elymaean separatism.

CHARACENE

With his keen eye for strategic and economic essentials, Alexander chose for one of his cities a site near the confluence of the Tigris and the Eulaos at the head of the Persian Gulf. Death brought the collapse of many of his schemes and it was left to a later Seleucid to refound this Alexandria as an Antioch. It must certainly have formed a link in the commercial chain established under Greek sponsorship as a result of the great anabasis of Antiochus III, who returned from the borders of India by way of Arachosia, Drangiane and Persis to Babylonia in about 205 B.C. We happen to know that one of the earlier governors or satraps of the district was called Numenius, recognizably of Mediterranean origin. Later on, in the second half of the next century, when power was passing from Seleucid to Parthian hands, the satrap was Hyspaosines, who must be an Iranian. At the same time, his territory changed its title from Mesene to Characene (or Charax, the original native designation) while his chief town became known as Spasinu, a name clearly cognate with his own, and here a mint was established.

Naturally enough, the earliest Characenian pieces stem directly in fabric and design from the Hellenistic money circulating in the locality. Hyspaosines, who invaded Babylonia when the Parthian empire was in difficulties about 126 B.C., struck these silver tetradrachms; they weigh about fifteen grammes and on the obverse have a beardless head while the reverse motif is a typically Greek Herakles (pl. 13 (1)). Their legend is ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΥΣΠΑΟΣΙΝΟΥ "of the king Hyspaosines", with

dates ΗΠΡ, ϘΡ or ΑϘΡ (125–121 B.C., on the assumption, surely correct, that these refer to the Seleucid era). A few small bronze coins carry a bearded head of Hyspaosines, sometimes with his father Sagdodonakos;[1] others are only known from examples overstruck by Mithradates II, after he had expelled the intruder.[2] The suppression of Hyspaosines' revolt would normally have led to the eclipse of the local dynasty. However, it has been suggested by Le Rider that the astute Arsacid, aware of the importance of Spasinu for the entrepôt trade, allowed Hyspaosines to remain so that he could police the adjacent seas, notorious until only recently for piratical activity.

In 110–109 B.C., well before the end of the reign of Mithradates II, appeared the next Characenian prince, Apodakos. He again struck tetradrachms (pl. 13 (2)) and bronze, the silver having the by now normal design of a seated Herakles on the reverse. A departure occurs with the silver (pl. 13 (3)) of Tiraios, dated between 95 and 88 B.C.; here the hero is replaced by Tyche. A monarch with markedly Semitic features enters the series at this point. However, both name and titulature – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΡΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ "of the king Tiraios the deliverer and the beneficent" – link him firmly enough with preceding rulers. A recent hoard has given us an almost complete run of his tetradrachms from 78 to 47 B.C. (pl. 13 (4)).[3]

Mention of both a Tiraios and an Artabazos occurs in a passage of pseudo-Lucian in connection with longevity.[4] However, our only coin of Artabazos is a unique tetradrachm dated ΔΞΣ (48–47 B.C.) which depicts a man nowhere near octogenarian status (pl. 13 (5)). The portrait is of startlingly high quality – startling, that is, in comparison with others of this period when the native die-cutters were struggling to emancipate themselves from the overwhelming pressure of the moribund artistic traditions of Greece. We hardly meet with such refined technique again until the numismatic renaissance under the early Sasanians. Certainly it is far superior to any piece emanating from the Parthian mints of Orodes II, presumed suzerain of Artabazos. The plethora of epithets – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΖΟ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ "of the king Artabazes, of divine descent, ruler in his own right, the deliverer, who loves his father and the Greeks" – and their square arrangement testify nevertheless to Arsacid exemplars.

[1] Jenkins, pl. v, no. 12.
[2] See Newell; also this volume pl. 2 (5)).
[3] Le Rider, "Monnaies de Characène", p. 243.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 248.

Objections to the coin's inclusion in the Characenian series are refuted by its use of a monogram which reappears two years later.[1]

Here we see it once more, this time on a tetradrachm of Attambelos I. Stylistically his issues (pl. 13 (6)) return to those of Tiraios and employ the same epithets, too. They include a few bronze coins, and their dates run from 46 to 27 B.C. There now ensues a succession of monarchs named Theonesios (ΘΙΟΝΗCΙΟΥ or ΘΕΟΝΗCΟΥ) or Attambelos (ΑΤΤΑΜΒΗΛΟΥ) up to about A.D. 113. The sole portrait variations are in the length of beard, while many coins bear counter-marks on the obverse (pl. 14 (1, 2)). Because of many gaps in the dates known, it is unrealistic to assign regnal numbers. Only one prince of another name occurs – Abinerglos or Adinerglos (ΑΒΙΝΗ...) – reigning during the second decade of the Christian era and probably to be identified with the Abbinerigos mentioned by Josephus.[2] Metallurgically speaking, Characenian tetradrachms of this period show a continuing debasement until all the silver disappears. An analysis of a coin of Attambelos II(?), 16 B.C. to A.D. 9, gives an alloy of approximately one-third silver and two-thirds copper.[3] An intriguing departure is the use of lead to supplement bronze for the minor currency.[4] With this, in general, striking is even less efficient than for the larger denomination, but on some specimens ΑΤΤΑΜ or ΘΙΕΝ can be made out.

The anarchy in Syria and Parthia after about 80 B.C. permitted Tiraios and subsequent merchant princes of Characene to reinforce their grip on the traffic in exotic goods from India, so eagerly sought by the Clodias and as bitterly condemned by the Catos of the expiring Roman republic. Now that there was no political need, as there had been in Achaemenian times, for such commerce to pass through Susa, direct caravan contacts were set up between Spasinu and Petra or Palmyra; the Nabatean Arabs cannot have been unwilling to share in the profits, while the empire of Odenathus and Zenobia was inspired by this example from an earlier age. Greeks also continued to play their part. Much of our knowledge of the history and geography associated with the Middle East of the period can be traced to two writers born in Spasinu, Dionysius and Isidore. The first survives only in fragments quoted by compilators and encyclopaedists such as Pliny, but from the second we have "Parthian Posting Stations", describing the route to Central Asia through northern Iran. Works of this nature were fre-

[1] Nodelman, p. 95.

[2] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX. 2. 2.

[3] Hill, *BMC Arabia*, p. cxcviii.

[4] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 254.

quently commissioned by men like Caius and Germanicus, generals sent from Rome ostensibly with a view to revenging Crassus, but probably having the more practical aim of reducing the middleman's role in trading. Any enemy of the Parthians was automatically the friend of Characene, and Roman embassies seem to have been favourably received in Spasinu. Whatever dreams the current Attambelos may have cherished about freedom from his Arsacid overlords, when the reality arrived, it was no more acceptable.

Trajan's invasion of Mesopotamia took him as far as Characene, where he imposed the usual concomitant of friendship with Romans – a demand for tribute. This ephemeral occupation, which lasted scarcely more than the winter of A.D. 115–16, was punctuated by uprisings further north; even so, historians of the Roman empire, more partisan than plausible, persist in representing Characene as a substantive province of the empire at its greatest extent. Subsequently Arsacid influence was reasserted, and the next coins from the area demonstrate this clearly. Dated ΥΝΔ (A.D. 142–3), they are "tetradrachms" (pl. 14 (3)) having an obverse bust with a Parthian-style tiara, decorated on the side with crescents; on the reverse we read ΜΕΡΕΔΑΤΗC ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΥΙΟC ΦΟΒΑ ΒΑCΙΛΕΩΣ "king Mihrdat, son of king Phoba". Earlier theories that this group stands outside the normal series are not now accepted.[1] Greek script, in a somewhat fragmentary state, appears for the last time on a few coins of the usual Characenian designs which have been attributed to an Orabzes.

After this the issues of the princes of Characene are anonymous or named in heterographic Aramaic script, those without legend having the standard types (pl. 14 (6)). Others, reading *ybyng'y MLK'* "Abinerglos (?) the king" have a royal bust on both sides (pl. 14 (4)). The interpretation of the legend is due to de Morgan, who compares the name to Abinerglos, that of a previous monarch.[2] The other side has some inscription, too, but its form is very variable and no convincing reading has yet been made. The same may be said of the final Characenian "tetradrachms" (pl. 14 (5)), which depict a diademed head on the obverse and on the reverse a head in a tiara. To de Morgan we owe the decipherment of one part as *m'g zy 'st'by'z MLK'* "Maga, son of king Attambelos (?)".[3] It is probable that this group was struck about

[1] H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre" ("Antiquités Syriennes" No. 38), *Syria* XXII (1941), p. 254.
[2] De Morgan, *Manuel*, p. 225.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 227 modified by Hill, *BMC Arabia*, p. ccv.

A.D. 200 and that the rise of the dynasty of Sāsān effectively suppressed all such local currencies.

The principal towns of Characene, Spasinu and the more recently prominent Forat, lying on the road westwards, were renamed by the nationalistically conscious Ardashīr, but no doubt their raison d'être, commerce, kept them flourishing. Certainly, a Palmyrene inscription implies that as late as A.D. 190 the camels were still trudging over the desert from southern Mesopotamia. Today, however, Spasinu lies deserted on its alluvial sand.[1] Only the coins attest its former importance.

[1] Hansman, pp. 36ff.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

KINGS OF PERSIS

King	Date
Bagadat Oborzos Artaxerxes I Autophradates I	*c.* 250–200 B.C.
Shikandat Darius I Autophradates II Darius II Oxathres Artaxerxes II	*c.* 160–30 B.C.
Namupat Pakorus Kapat Mithra Artaxerxes III Manuchihr I Manuchihr II Artaxerxes IV Artaxerxes V = Ardashīr	*c* 30 B.C.–A.D. 224

KINGS OF ELYMAIS

Hyknapses *c.* 162 B.C.
Kamnaskires I *c.* 147 B.C.
Tigraios I *c.* 138–132 B.C.
Kamnaskires II and Anzaze *c.* 82 B.C.
Kamnaskires III *c.* 65 B.C.
Kamnaskirid dynasty *c.* 65 B.C.–A.D. 45

King	Date
Orodes I Kamnaskires-Orodes II Phraates Chosroes	*c.* A.D. 45–120
Orodes III and Ulfān Unnamed princes	*c.* A.D. 120–224

KINGS OF CHARACENE

Hyspaosines *c.* 125–121 B.C.
Apodakos *c.* 110 B.C.
Tiraios I *c.* 95–88 B.C.
Tiraios II *c.* 78–47 B.C.
Artabazos *c.* 48 B.C.
Attambelos I *c.* 47–27 B.C.
Theoneses *c.* 10 B.C.
Abinerglos I *c.* A.D. 10
Attambelid dynasty *c.* A.D. 10–130
Mihrdat *c.* A.D. 142

King	Date
Orabzes Abinerglos II Maga	*c.* A.D. 150–224

APPENDIX 2

TABLE OF MONOGRAMS AND SCRIPTS

PARTHIA

[monogram]	(Α+Γ)	= Agbatana (Ecbatana)
[monogram]	(Α+Γ+Τ)	= Agbatana (Ecbatana)
[monogram]	(Ρ+Γ)	= Rhagae
[monogram]	(Μ+θ)	= Mithradatkart (Nisa)
[monogram]	(Μ+θ+Τ)	= Mithradatkart (Nisa)
Κ		= Konkobar
[monogram]	(Κ+Ρ)	= Konkobar
Λ		= Laodicea
[monogram]	(Λ+Ο)	= Laodicea
[monogram]	(Α+Ρ+Τ)	= Artemita
[monogram]	(?)	= Susa
[monogram]	(?)	= Susa
ΝΙ		= Nisa
Μ		= Margiane
Π		= Margiane
[monogram]		= Areia
Τ		= Traxiane
[monogram]	(Σ+Τ+Ρ)	= Travelling Court Mint (*κατα* ΣΤΡΑΤΕΙΑ)
[monogram]		
[script sign]		wl
[script sign]		wl
[script sign]		wl M
[script sign]		pk
[script sign]		’r

krny

mtrdt MLK'

wlgšy MLK'

ḥwsrw MLK'

'rtbnw MLK'

PERSIS

bgdt prtrk' zy 'lḥy'

wḥwbrz prtrk'zy 'lḥy'

'rtḥštr prtrk' zy 'lḥ

wtprdt prtrk' zy 'lḥy'

d'ryw MLK'

wtprdt MLK'

d'ryw MLK BRH wtprdt MLK'

wḥwḥšt MLK' BRH d'ry MLK'

'rtḥštr MLK' BRH d'ryw MLK'

nmwpt MLK' BRH 'rtḥ

pkwr MLK' BRH wḥwḥ

kp't MLK' BRH nmwpt

wtprdt ML

'rtḥšt ~ mtry MLK'

mnčtry MLK'

'rtḥšt MLK' ~ mnčtry MLK'

ELYMAIS

wrwd MLK'

wrwd MLK' BRI wrwd

kbnḥkyr wrwd MLK

. . . . 't MLK' br wrwd MLK

(wl) p'n ~ wrwd MLK

CHARACENE

ybyng'y MLK'

m'g zy 'st' by'z MLK'

APPENDIX 3

KEY TO PLATES 1–14

Thanks are due to the American Numismatic Society, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the Boston Museum and the British Museum for permission to illustrate coins in their collections. Ar. = silver; Ae. = copper.

PLATES 1–9 COINS OF PARTHIA

Plate 1

1. Arsaces I. Ar. drachm. Nisā?, *c.* 220 B.C.
2. Arsaces I. Ar. drachm. Nisā-Mithradādkart?, *c.* 220 B.C.
3. Arsaces II. Ar. drachm. Hecatompylos?, *c.* 210 B.C.
4. Mithradates I. Ar. drachm. Hecatompylos?, *c.* 160 B.C.
5. Mithradates I. Ar. drachm. Hecatompylos?, *c.* 150 B.C.
6. Mithradates I. Ar. drachm. Hecatompylos?, *c.* 145 B.C.
7. Mithradates I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 140 B.C. (B.M.).
8. Mithradates I. Ae. 2-chalkoi. Ecbatana?, *c.* 140 B.C.
9. Mithradates I. Ar. obol. Ecbatana?, *c.* 140 B.C.
10. Mithradates I. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, 141/140 B.C. (B.M.).
11. Mithradates I. Ar. drachm. Seleucia, 140/139 B.C.
12. Phraates II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 135 B.C.
13. Phraates II. Ar. drachm. Nisā, *c.* 135 B.C.
14. Phraates II. Ar. drachm. Seleucia, *c.* 128 B.C. (B.M.).
15. Inter-regnal issue. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 126 B.C. (Boston).

Plate 2

1. Artabanus I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 127 B.C.
2. Artabanus I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 125 B.C.
3. Artabanus I. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, 125/124 B.C. (B.M.).
4. Mithradates II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 123 B.C. (Boston).
5. Mithradates II. Ae. 2-chalkoi. Spasinu, *c.* 122/121 B.C.
6. Mithradates II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 115 B.C.
7. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 115 B.C.
8. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 115 B.C.
9. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 115 B.C. (B.M.).
10. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 105 B.C.
11. Mithradates II. Ae. chalkous. Susa, *c.* 105 B.C.
12. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 100 B.C.

Plate 3

1. Mithradates II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 95 B.C.
2. Gotarzes I. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 90 B.C.
3. Orodes I. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 85 B.C.
4. Orodes I. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 85 B.C.
5. Orodes I. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 85 B.C.
6. Orodes I. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 85 B.C., countermarked by Otanes in Herāt?
7. Unknown king. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 80 B.C. (A.N.S.).
8. Unknown king. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 75 B.C.
9. Unknown king. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, *c.* 75 B.C.
10. Unknown king. Ar. drachm. Areia, *c.* 70 B.C.
11. Unknown king. Ar. drachm. Travelling court mint working at Rhagae?, *c.* 70 B.C.
12. Sinatruces. Ar. drachm. Rhagae?, *c.* 75 B.C.

APPENDIX

Plate 4

1. Sinatruces. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 75 B.C. (A.N.S.).
2. Darius (?). Ar. drachm. Rhagae, *c.* 70 B.C.
3. Darius (?). Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 70 B.C. (B.M.).
4. Darius (?). Ar. drachm. Mithradādkart-Nisā, *c.* 70 B.C.
5. Phraates III. Ar. drachm. Mithradādkart-Nisā, *c.* 65 B.C.
6. Phraates III. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 60 B.C. (A.N.S.).
7. Phraates III. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* 60 B.C.
8. Mithradates III. Ar. drachm. Nisā-Mithradādkart, *c.* 57 B.C.
9. Mithradates III. Ar. drachm. Travelling court mint working at Rhagae?, *c.* 55 B.C.
10. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* 55 B.C.
11. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Nisā, *c.* 55 B.C.
12. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Travelling court mint working at Ecbatana?, *c.* 50 B.C.

Plate 5

1. Orodes II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 55 B.C. (A.N.S.).
2. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Kangavar, *c.* 45 B.C.
3. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Traxiane, *c.* 45 B.C.
4. Orodes II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 40 B.C.
5. Orodes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* 40 B.C.
6. Orodes II. Ar. obol. Rhagae, *c.* 40 B.C.
7. Pacorus I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* 37 B.C.
8. Phraates IV. Ar. drachm. Rhagae, *c.* 35 B.C.
9. Phraates IV. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* 35 B.C.
10. Phraates IV. Ar. drachm. Susa, *c.* 30 B.C.
11. Phraates IV. Ar. drachm. Travelling court mint working at Laodicea?, *c.* 20 B.C.
12. Tiridates. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* May, 26 B.C.

Plate 6

1. Phraates IV. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* 26 B.C., overstruck on Tiridates (cf. pl. 5 (12)).
2. Phraates IV. Ar. drachm. Nisā-Mithradādkart, *c.* 10 B.C.
3. Phraataces. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 1.
4. Phraataces and Musa. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* December, A.D. 2 (B.M.).
5. Phraataces and Musa. Ar. drachm. Susa, *c.* A.D. 2
6. Orodes III. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* February, A.D. 6 (B.M.).
7. Vonones I. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* August, A.D. 11, overstruck on Phraataces and Musa (cf. no. 5 above) dated *c.* September, A.D. 3.
8. Vonones I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 10.
9. Artabanus II. Ar. drachm. Rhagae, *c.* A.D. 20.
10. Artabanus II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, *c.* October, A.D. 26 (B.M.).
11. Artabanus II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 30.
12. Artabanus II. Ar. drachm. Susa, *c.* A.D. 25.

Plate 7

1. Artabanus II. Ae. chalkous. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 30.
2. Civic Issue. Seleucia. Ae. denomination?, *c.* A.D. 10.
3. Vardanes I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 45.
4. Vardanes I. Copy of Ar. drachm. Begram (?), *c.* A.D. 45, countermarked with a helmeted head.
5. Gotarzes II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 46/7.
6. Gotarzes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 50.
7. Gotarzes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 50.
8. Vonones II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A. D. 50.
9. Vardanes II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 57/8.
10. Vardanes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 55.
11. Vologases I. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 66/7.
12. Vologases I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 70.
13. Vologases I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, *c.* A.D. 70.

Plate 8

1. Vologases II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 77/8.
2. Vologases II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 80.
3. Pacorus II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 80.
4. Artabanus III. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 80/1 (B.M.).
5. Artabanus III. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 80.
6. Pacorus II. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, c. January, A.D. 83 (B.M.).
7. Pacorus II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 85.
8. Pacorus II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 95.
9. Vologases III. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana?, c. A.D. 130.
10. Osroes I. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 125.
11. Parthamaspates. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 120.
12. Mithradates IV. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 140.

Plate 9

1. Vologases III. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 124/125.
2. Unknown king. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 145.
3. Vologases IV. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 179/180.
4. Vologases IV. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 180.
5. Osroes II. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 190.
6. Vologases V. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 190/191 (B.M.).
7. Vologases V. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 198/199.
8. Vologases V. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 195.
9. Vologases VI. Ar. tetradrachm. Seleucia, A.D. 218/219.
10. Vologases VI. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 215.
11. Artabanus IV. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 215
12. Artabanus IV. Ar. drachm. Ecbatana, c. A.D. 220.

Plate 10

COINS OF PERSIS

1. Bagadat, Ar. dr. (B.M.).
2. Oborzos, Ar. dr. (B.M.).
3. Artaxerxes I, Ar. ½-dr. (B.M.).
4. Autophradates I, Ar. tet., overstruck on Alexander III (B.M.).
5. Autophradates I, Ar. tet. (B.M.).
6. Autophradates I (?), Ar. dr. (B.M.).
7. Anonymous issue, Ar. tet. (B.M.).
8. Anonymous issue, Ar. dr.
9. Shikandat (?), Ar. dr.
10. Darius I, Ar. dr.
11. Autophradates II, Ar. dr. (B.N.).
12. Darius II, Ar. dr.

Plate 11

COINS OF PERSIS AND ELYMAIS

1. Oxathres, Ar. diobol. (B.M.).
2. Artaxerxes II, Ar. dr. (B.M.).
3. Namopat, Ar. dr. (B.M.).
4. Pakur, Ar. dr. (B.M.).
5. Kapat, Ar. ½-dr. (B.M.).
6. Artaxerxes III, Ar. ½-dr. (B.M.).
7. Manuchihr I (?), Ar. diobol.

8. Manuchihr II (?), Ar. dr. (B.M.).
9. Artaxerxes IV, Ar. ½-dr. (B.M.).
10. Kamnaskires I, Ar. tet. (B.M.).
11. Kamnaskires I, Ar. tet. (B.N.).
12. Kamnaskires II (?) and Anzaze, Ar. tet. (B.M.).

Plate 12

COINS OF ELYMAIS

1. Kamnaskires III (?), Ar. dr., 251 S.E.
2. Kamnaskires IV (?), billon tet. (B.M.).
3. Kamnaskires V (?), Ae. dr.
4. Orodes I, Ae. dr.
5. Phraates, Ae. tet. (B.M.).
6. Phraates, Ae. dr.
7. Phraates, A.e. dr.
8. Phraates, Ae. dr.
9. Orodes II, Ae. tet.
10. Orodes II, Ae. dr.
11. Kamnaskires-Orodes III, Ae. dr.
12. Orodes IV, Ae. dr.
13. Anonymous king, Ae. dr.
14. Anonymous king, Ae. dr.
15. Anonymous king, Ae. dr. (B.N.).

Plate 13

COINS OF CHARACENE

1. Hyspaosines, Ar. tet., 190 S.E. (B.N.).
2. Apodakos, Ar. tet., 209 S.E. (B.N.).
3. Tiraios I, Ar. tet., 218 S.E. (B.N.).
4. Tiraios II, Ar. tet. (B.N.).
5. Artabazos, Ar. tet., 264 S.E. (B.N.).
6. Attambelos I (?), Ar. tet., 272 (?) S.E. (B.M.).

Plate 14

COINS OF CHARACENE

1. Attambelos III (?), Ae. tet. (B.M.).
2. Attambelos IV (?), Ae. tet. (B.N.).
3. Meherdates, Ae. tet., 454 S.E. (B.M.).
4. Abinerglos II (?), Ae. tet. (B.N.).
5. Maga, Ae. tet. (B.M.).
6. Anonymous king, Ae. tet. (B.M.)

CHAPTER 9

SASANIAN COINS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Achaemenian, Arsacid and Sasanian dynasties which together ruled Iran for more than a millennium, all struck coins, but the issues of the last of these have come to be of the greatest importance; indeed, this coinage is an invaluable source of information about the history, culture and economic life of the Sasanian state. Virtually all that we know about Sasanian numismatics is based on the coins themselves; they evidently neither continue precisely the Arsacid tradition, nor break with it completely.

The Sasanians adopted the denominations and weight standard used by their predecessors, and like the Arsacids they kept the obverse for the ruler's effigy and the reverse for the imperial insignia. In this, the influence of earlier coinage in the dynasty's home province of Persis is as much in evidence as that of their traditional adversary in the west, the Romans. The changes as compared with earlier practice are seen in the iconography of each side of the coin, and in their various combinations, in the development of fresh elements and their progressive canonization (or rigid acceptance as an unvarying feature), in the script and the epigraphic element, and lastly in technique and style. Broad political considerations, events in the foreign political scene, changes in the methods by which armies were paid, and matters of taxation policy brought about changes in organization and production. The propagandist element which played such a large part in the contemporary Roman state, and which is discernible (albeit to a much lesser extent) in earlier Arsacid coinage, is almost completely absent. Events such as the capture of the Roman Emperor Valerian I in A.D. 260 or the conclusion of peace with Philip II, the Arab, – also claimed as a Persian victory – following the violent death of the Emperor Gordian III in A.D. 244, were indeed represented in no less than five rock reliefs by Shāpūr I,[1] but made not the slightest impact on the coinage. Coinage is, for the Sasanians, primarily an economic tool. If there is any political thinking in evidence, it is seen only in the blunt (but by no means total)

[1] See Göbl, "Der Triumph des Sāsāniden Šahpuhr".

rejection of the now defunct dynasty, in calculated gestures of defiance to Rome, and in the shrewd way the Sasanians dealt with the mintings of the Kushān western empire, which they conquered and held for the best part of a generation in the middle of the 4th century (pl. 31 (1–5)). Of course the initial artistic impulse was not sustained for any length of time, and quite frequently we find a crude sketchiness of design taking its place. In the 5th century, any remaining flexibility disappears; with the reign of Kavād I, the aesthetic torpidity which characterizes late Sasanian coinage sets in. But the numismatic history of the Sasanians viewed as a whole is that of a thoroughly distinctive type within the monetary world of Antiquity and of the Orient. It accomplishes the transition from ancient times to the Middle Ages without a break. None of the stages of its development, which can be established in detail, represents a turning-point of the same importance as for example the monetary reform of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I in 498. The coinage enjoyed an extraordinary continuity and stability over a period of four hundred years and more, and this ensured for it an enormous influence both on the contemporary world and on posterity. But there is no simple explanation for the qualities referred to here, which may perhaps be compared, if only remotely, with those of the coinage of Venice in the medieval and early modern periods of European history. Thus Irano-Hunnish and, later, western Turkish peoples and dynasties minted all sorts of imitations of the Sasanian drachm in regions where its influence survived (pl. 32 (1–8)). Although the Arab conquest of Iran was sustained and inspired by the new religion of Islam, the Sasanian coin design, with the bust of the king on the obverse and – far more remarkably – the fire-altar of the Zoroastrians on the reverse, was preserved in Iran up to the reform of 79 A.H. (A.D. 698), i.e. for another half-century; and in Ṭabaristān until 178 A.H. (A.D. 794), a further century (pl. 31 (6–9)). With the striking of the first true thin-flan coins in history, the influence of the Sasanians on coinage and currency technology extends through the Arabs to Byzantium; and – via the technologically derivative denars, deniers and pennies minted in medieval Europe – far into the modern period. Vast quantities of actual Sasanian drachms, alongside Arabo-Sasanian *dirhams*, constituted the usual currency of the Arab conquerors. They even continued in circulation for a fair period of time in their trimmed-down form corresponding to the reduced weight of the dirham introduced by the reform of 79 A.H. Widely disseminated along with purely Arab currency, they

turn up, mainly as clipped specimens, as far afield as the dirham finds in northern Europe. Sasanian coins are significant in themselves, in the first place, as evidence of Sasanian craftsmanship (see Section 6), and in this sphere they exercised an influence into which, as yet, little research has been undertaken (cf. for example the evidence only recently adduced of multiple borders containing astral symbols on the decoration of some mirrors dating from the T'ang period in China).[1] In the second place, they represent, with their portrayal of a total to date of 30 attested rulers with their personal crowns, the first and only really reliable guideline we possess to the whole range of Sasanian art and its chronological problems. The investigation of Sasanian coins goes back as far as the early 19th century, and in its second half Mordtmann made an especially significant contribution. Only after the middle of this century, however, did the structural analyses presented by the author,[2] reveal the regular pattern of minting and point to new lines of research in which there remain many open questions, especially those concerning the history of the mints and denominations, monetary dealings, iconographic problems, etc. The application of Sasanian numismatic sources to the history, economic patterns and cultural life of Iran is thus only at an early stage.

2. THE COIN-PORTRAIT

The alteration in Sasanian numismatic portraiture stems from Iranian national tradition;[3] such changes reflect a rejection of the Arsacid dynasty and all it stood for (but see below for comments on a conscious reaction against this attitude), a deliberate challenge to the old enemy, Rome, and a focussing of attention upon the national religious ideas embodied in Zoroastrianism. On the obverse the king's portrait is made to face right, in contrast to the practice under the Arsacids. Frontal portrayals are rare; they are found only on commemorative issues. The custom of inscribing coins with the king's name and titles close to the edge was adopted from Rome (see Section 4). In an experimental phase which started under Ardashīr I, and did not end until the

[1] R. Göbl, "Spiegel der T'ang-Zeit mit sasanidischem Randdekor", in J. Bergman *et al.* (eds), *Ex orbe religionum; studia G. Widengren...oblata* II (Leiden, 1972), 80–2.

[2] "Aufbau der Münzprägung"; *Die Münzen der Sasaniden.*

[3] See the complete series of Sasanian rulers with all the main crowns known to date in pls 25–30 (3), and fig. 1, p. 135. (Only the sixth crown of Ardashīr I is missing, see Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, Table Ia, Obverse VIII.) Reference may be made to these throughout for comparative purposes, as it is not possible in this compressed presentation to provide every detail with an individual plate reference.

period of his immediate successors, the ruler at first adopted the crown of the Parthian king Mithridates II (who – as the real founder of the second great Iranian empire – had clearly been excepted from the verdict on his dynasty), and modified this crown in a number of ways. Yet even in this there appears the native tradition of Persis, where the monarchs of the second dynasty had worn similar crowns. The mural crown of Ahura Mazda, which he wears as in the investiture relief at Naqsh-i Rustam, and the tall cap with the eagle of Anāhīt, decorated with ribbons, in the lateral field, introduce the typically Sasanian custom of adopting the symbols of the gods for the royal crowns: merlons representing Ahura Mazda, Anāhīt; loops with branches or the conventional representation of these – *lamellae*, representing Anāhīt; wings, standing for Verethragna, Anāhīt; an eagle's head, for Anāhīt; rays, for Mithra. Yazdgard I also added the moon, and Khusrau II a star, as emblems. As the kings in many cases had several investiture deities and the stock of emblems was soon exhausted, there emerged in the Sasanian crown a combination of the emblems of different gods, which was individually made up for each ruler. As the coins make plain, the convention of individual crowns was so strict that a king whose reign was interrupted by an untoward event, such as captivity or usurpation, was forced to assume a new crown, because the crown symbolized the *xwarrah* or divine aura of the ruler. The new crown was based on the old one and represented it in an enhanced form. The emblems were mounted on a golden (?) circlet, and later even on a "Spangenhelm", an arched portion rising above the head. The increasing complexity of the elements finally made the crowns so heavy that, for the purposes of royal grand audiences, they were hung by a chain exactly above the monarch's head; Khusrau II's crown is said to have weighed ultimately 91 kgs![1] The Sasanian crowns, incidentally, had a distinct formative influence on those of western Europe. The king's hair under the Arsacids was divided into two balls of carefully trimmed curls, one above the crown and one on the back of the head, and under the Sasanians the upper one (probably a wig) became virtually part of the crown, since it and the top of the head were covered by a gaily coloured silk crèpe. Under Ardashīr I, Shāpūr I and Bahrām I this was also drawn through and under the circlet and diadem. The colours varied according to the king, and in the case of emblems of identical design provided an additional individual feature of the crown.

[1] Tha'ālibī, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. and trans. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), pp. 699–700.

We have partial information about the colours from Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī.[1] If two colours are noted, the first reference is to the globe, the second to the crown of the head, that is to say the crown-cap which developed as an independent item at the same time as the wig. The globe changed its form with time, becoming smaller, and under Khusrau II and some of his successors, was replaced by a star. The cap, too, finally became through its shape (tall or flat) a distinguishing feature of the crown, as the other points of difference disappeared. For several kings we know of special crowns and their presence has caused some confusion for art historians. But they are always based on parts of the regular crowns of the respective rulers, and (as has recently been shown) may be described as reduced regular crowns.[2] The purpose of these and the reason for their introduction are not entirely obvious, but it is clear that they appear on special issues connected with the commemoration of events now forgotten. The pairs of ribbons have a special rôle on the crowns (and elsewhere); the crowns always have two of these, one pair representing the free ends of the diadem behind the knot at the back of the head and therefore hanging loose from the circlet. Later, they are tucked away behind the balls of hair on the nape of the neck, and it is through this that the erroneous impression arises that they are suspended from the neck chain. From the third crown of Pērōz on, these ribbons are symmetrically divided to the right and left of the bust, and pointed upwards. A second pair of ribbons, which are somewhat smaller, serve to separate globe and cap, and no longer appear in those cases where a pair of wings is set on the arched portion above the cap. In a few cases (occasionally under Bahrām IV, Yazdgard I and especially under Kavād I) this pair of ribbons is also pointed symmetrically upwards. As depicted on the coins, the Sasanian crowns obey the law of frontal representation and must be interpreted accordingly. Since the busts are given in profile, emblems which cannot be recognized or definitely identified must be turned at 90° to the observer. The rare portraits *en face* corroborate this. Among the thirty rulers so far verified in coin portraits, there is only one queen who reigns alone, namely Bōrān. Like the consort of Bahrām II on his family portraits, she wears plaits, richly worked with jewels, which hang down beneath the crown. The queen of Bahrām II and the crown princes depicted with this monarch, as well as Shāpūr I in his position as crown prince on rare

[1] Erdmann, "Die Entwicklung", p. 89, n. 10.

[2] Göbl, "Der Triumph des Sāsāniden Šahpuhr", pp. 33 ff.

issues from the reign of Ardashīr I are shown wearing either tall domed crowns (the Median form) or caps with animal heads (eagle, wild boar, horse) which indicate allusions to investiture deities (Anāhīt and Verethragna). Even effigies of Shāpūr I show him wearing an eagle cap as a special crown, and in the case of Hormizd II, the eagle head is part of the combination of emblems in the normal crown. All the kings wear rich vestments which are essentially the same, with broad chest bands, a necklet and jewel, with small crescent moons on the shoulders. Balāsh is the only Sasanian to have a flame on the left shoulder; the meaning of this is not clear. Flames on the shoulder were hitherto common only among the Kushān kings.

The reverse of the coins always bears the fire-altar with flames. There are three principal varieties: (*a*) the altar alone; (*b*) the altar with the two flanking figures; (*c*) as the last type with an additional bust in the flames. Ardashīr I introduced the first type. It consists of a column, sometimes fluted, with several stepped plinths; the principal plinth of the altar is supported by four lion paws, of which two are visible, resting on mushroom-like objects. They have recently been connected with the representation of the Achaemenian throne at Persepolis.[1] As early as the reign of Shāpūr I this form of altar gave way to the second form, and thereafter it appears only on special issues. The second type is by far the most common and dominant. The significance of the two attendant figures has not yet been thoroughly clarified. In particular, it is not known whether the symmetrical arrangement has any other import than pure decoration. The figures initially carry long rods, and later have clearly identifiable *barsman* bundles in their hands; they begin by facing away from the altar, but later turn towards it. Beginning with the fifth year of Khusrau I, they stand frontally, resting first on long sticks and later on short ones or on swords. From the time of Bahrām II onwards, at least one of the attendant figures represents the ruler himself (judging from the crown), and the double representation of the king also begins under his reign. The bust in the flames, long held to be that of Ahura Mazda, merely represents an amplification of the second type and occurs only between the reigns of Hormizd II and Balāsh; even so, its presence is not continuous and is usually in addition to the other types. But it always seems to stand for the king himself, as may be seen in the case of Bahrām V and Balāsh (where it is set

[1] Ilona Pfeiler, "Der Thron der Achaimeniden als Herrschaftssymbol auf sasanidischen Münzen", *Schweizer Münzblätter* XXIII, no. 91 (Berne, 1973), 107–11.

somewhat lower in front of the altar plinth), and could refer to the introduction of royal fires. The altar columns of types (*b*) and (*c*) carry ribbons after Narseh. Special reverse designs allude to investitures, with representations either of the investiture deity (Hormizd I: Mithra, Anāhīt; Bahrām II: Anāhīt) or of the ruler alone (Kavād I, Khusrau I). Further special issues under Khusrau II show the goddess Anāhīt (bust) in a nimbus of flames, or the king standing. The reasons for these are not yet known in detail, but fall within the period of the great conflicts with Byzantium under the Emperor Heraclius. In one single case (Zāmāsp) an investiture (conducted by Ahura Mazda) is shown on the obverse. An obol ($\frac{1}{6}$ drachm) of Shāpūr III has the diadem alone as its complete reverse design. It also occurs sometimes as a supplementary sign (in one instance even in the reign of Shāpūr II) on the altar pillar.

A peculiarity of Sasanian coins is the presence of a number of dotted border rings. It appears first under Shāpūr II, but irregularly, and does not become a feature of both sides until Khusrau II; then, the reverse generally has one more ring than the obverse. Certain later kings return to the simple ring. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon must derive from certain cosmological concepts, though we are not at present in a position to interpret them. There is a definite, though again unclarified, connection between such concepts and the use of astral symbols (a crescent moon, or later a crescent moon and star) to divide the outer field of the obverse into four segments, perhaps corresponding to the cardinal points and indicating the claim of the cosmic kingship to world domination; this practice starts in the reign of Kavād I and, from Khusrau II onwards, extends to the reverses also.

A division into three occurs once under Shāpūr II. On the obverses, where only three actual symbols or combinations ever appear, the appropriate crown emblems make the number up to four. Concerning the system of coupling obverse and reverse, see section 5 below and pl. 31 (6–9).

3. DENOMINATIONS AND WEIGHT STANDARDS

As regards weight-standard and choice of denominations, the Sasanians at first kept strictly to existing traditions. The silver drachm of Attic weight, which even in Parthian times was everywhere the commonest currency, became the chief denomination of the Sasanian state. Throughout the dynasty's four centuries, both the weight of the drachm, almost

exactly 4 grammes, and the fineness of its metal were well maintained (but for two exceptions, see section 5, Monetary circulation). Half-drachms occur only initially, as an innovation, but are later given up. Obols and half-obols are special strikings, primarily in connection with investitures, where they function as coins for gifts and for throwing to the crowds. The tetradrachms of billon (a poor silver alloy) which were taken over from the Arsacids and still minted in considerable numbers by Ardashīr I, cease under Bahrām II (the last known striking). After initial attempts to establish a large standard copper coin (unit) with minor denominations (perhaps conceived as a substitute for the billon tetradrachms), copper more or less completely loses its place as the official metal of coinage. Small copper coins, like small silver ones, are henceforth used for ceremonial purposes (see above). As was the case later under Islam, urban requirements of small change were almost completely satisfied by the copper currency of the Parthian period which was still in circulation, consisting of Arsacid and even Hellenistic coins. Resuming the Achaemenian tradition, the Sasanians revived gold strikings, which the Arsacids had not used, (though less out of regard for the gold reserves of the Roman emperors than because they saw no necessity for it). Under the Sasanians, however, gold was used predominantly for prestige and display issues and, significantly, it was linked in many instances to special types. Roman prototypes are followed: the *dīnār* (from *denarius aureus*) corresponds to the Roman aureus, and the new-weight dīnār to the Roman *solidus* (from the time of Constantine the Great), as a result of which old dīnārs continued to be struck at 1½ times the weight of the new dīnārs. Thirds of dīnārs, and some fractional denominations which remain obscure, are met with after Yazdgard I, and in addition there is a sixth of a dīnār under Kavād I. The circumstances surrounding gold strikings, which some rulers do not make at all, have not been sufficiently researched for definite assertions to be made. The dīnārs of Bahrām VI present an unusual case because of their marked dependence on Byzantine influence. After Khusrau II, gold ceases to be struck.

4. SCRIPT AND EPIGRAPHY

The formulation of Sasanian coin inscriptions is determined by the political and religious motives of the dynasty; their form, however, is largely determined by the choice of portrait and the amount of space remaining, and is of course also dependent on the size of the individual

denominations. The coin inscriptions are in Sasanian Pahlavī (Middle Persian) and, in isolated instances, ideograms are used. The Pahlavī alphabet is at first that of the inscriptions; from about the time of Khusrau I onwards the later form, which is closer to Book Pahlavī, is found. The obverse always bears the name and title of the king, while later the reverse introduces as standard features both the place of minting and the regnal year, after the reigns of Bahrām IV and Zāmāsp respectively. The development of both sides proceeds in relatively clearly defined stages in canonical formulae. Special issues for particular occasions, either in regular denominations or special ones, display special legends.

The legend-type remains the same down to and including Bahrām V, but is often and variously abbreviated. In full, it reads: *mzdysn bgy*... (name)...*MLK'n MLK' 'yl'n MNW čtry MN yzd'n*, "The worshipper of Mazdah, the divine...(name)..., King of Kings of Iran, who is descended from the gods." From Hormizd I until Shāpūr III inclusive, *W 'nyl'n* ("and non-Iran") is occasionally inserted. Yazdgard I has the special title *l'mštly* ("Delight of the Empire"). The legend, which usually begins at 11 o'clock and runs anticlockwise, is sometimes continued by the engraver in a second line on the left-hand side if he cannot fit it into one circle. More frequently, however, the legend is abbreviated (in most cases irregularly); as the engraver of the inscription has only the space left over by the portrait-engraver in which to work, words normally occupying the space underneath the bust are omitted, as are, occasionally, those elsewhere. Thus it is necessary to know the canonical form in order to decipher the legends correctly. Writing errors and slavish copying by illiterate engravers, the doubling of certain letters in addition to their occasional ambiguity, and the omission of parts of words add to the problems of decipherment in detail, and have given rise to many misreadings. Yazdgard II and Pērōz bear the short form *mzdysn bgy kdy*...(name)..., "The worshipper of Mazdah, the divine king...(name)", and when this is used the remainder of the earlier title is dropped. Balāsh has the special formula *hwkl wld'[š]* "the good king Balāsh". A complete innovation appears with Kavād I, who has only the name, and adds *'pzwn* ("increase") in his 12th year. This formula is retained until the end of the dynasty and only Khusrau II adds the ideogram *GDH* = *xwarrah* "splendour". The usurper Bistām has a special form: *pylwc wyst'hm* "Pērōz (victor) Bistām". After the 11th year of the reign of Khusrau II, and only in

his reign, the word *'pd* ("praise") is found in the second quadrant of the border of the obverse, but not in every year, and not from every mint. The meaning of this inscription is not yet clear.

The reverses initially bear the additional inscription *NWR' ZY*... (name) "Fire of...(name)" on each side of the altar. The ideogram *NWR'* is replaced from Shāpūr III on by the Middle Persian equivalent *'twl* "fire". From the time of Bahrām V, only the king's name is left, and from Zāmāsp onwards this too is dropped, because from now on the year of the reign is given in its place, as was the case for a short while under Pērōz. After Bahrām IV some indication of the mint is usually given, but its position is not yet fixed, being divided amongst the free spaces on the reverse, including the altar columns; it is frequently given in its full form. From Bahrām V onwards, it assumes its canonical place in the right-hand field.

Among special legends, the following are worthy of note: on a dīnār of Kavād I from the year of the death of Pērōz (the 25th), *yb'ny 'pzw(t?)* "The youth has grown [to strength]"; on a dīnār of Khusrau I from the year of the death of Kavād I (the 44th), *gyh'n pl' kynt* "Who bestows splendour on the earth". In addition, two different varieties of special legend occur under Khusrau II: on a dīnār of year 21 and on drachms of the years 26, 27, 36 and 37, *'yl'n 'pzwt 'nyt* "Iran has grown to strength" (with a portrait of Anāhīt in a nimbus of flames); and on two dīnārs of the years 33 and 34, *'yl'n 'pybym klt'l* "Who makes Iran free of fear". While the special legends of Kavād I and Khusrau I are typical accession strikings, those of Khusrau II already reflect the critical situation of the conflict with Byzantium and the incipient collapse of the empire, which was sealed by the Arab conquest.

5. MINTS, MINT ORGANIZATION; MONETARY CIRCULATION

In the absence of other accounts, our theories are only to be deduced from the material that has been preserved. Strict central control is discernible from the outset. A substantial part of the organization is certainly taken over from that of the Arsacids, from the Sasanian homeland, Pārs, and also from Roman models. The number of mints varies. At the beginning, there are probably no more than three, but in the 4th century, with the eastern campaigns of Shāpūr II, war-mints also appear, one of which was definitely situated in modern Afghanistan. With isolated precedents under Bahrām I and Shāpūr II, to which in

the course of further research other examples are sure to be added, there begins with Bahrām V the obligatory designation of the mints, chiefly in the form of signs (abbreviations), rarely in full.

We now know about one hundred mint signs of this sort.[1] As several of them give different abbreviations or names for one and the same mint, and many establishments were only short-lived, probably being set up merely for reasons of war, the total number of active mints at any period is considerably lower than this. At the time of the mass striking of drachms under the later Sasanians, probably no more than 20 mints were in operation at once. As yet it has not been possible to identify the places of minting in detail in every instance on the basis of these signs. A number of them have however been identified. It has been possible to trace some of them in reference to the large cities of the empire (i.e. provincial and district capitals) for which there was evidence of earlier issues, or on the basis of names which appeared in full, or again by using the clues afforded by certain late Sasanian official seals which have the same sign in their centres, but bear the full name inscribed around the border.[2] Further help is offered on the general state of monetary circulation by hoard analysis; to judge from these, it is the products of the nearest mint which are most frequently represented. But we possess all too few finds which were buried in the Sasanian period. Sasanian drachms from hoards buried in the Arab period, and mixed with dirhams, cannot as a rule be used, since such coins had travelled too far from their places of origin. And unfortunately only a very few finds reach researchers in an intact condition.

The pattern of mintings is now fairly clear. It shows that there was a centrally administered policy of constant change in combinations of obverses and reverses in chronological sequence. In accordance with this policy the coin-portrait and the legends were made more detailed or less so, as the case might be, but with a distinct tendency towards canonical formulations.[3] The almost mathematical pattern found in the variation of coin-portraits, where such variation is independent of the individual crowns on the obverses, together with the increasing

[1] My student, W. Szaivert has written a dissertation on "The activity of Sasanian mints after the general introduction of signing and dating" (Vienna, 1975, unpublished).

[2] See R. Göbl, *Die Tonbullen von Tacht-e Suleiman* (Berlin, 1976; publication of the German Archaeological Institute, Tehran), ch. 8 (section 2): "Sasanian official seals", with classification scheme and bibliographical references, especially to recent articles of P. Gignoux. The first investigations were made by E. Herzfeld, *Transactions of the International Numismatics Congress* 1936 (London, 1938), pp. 416 ff.

[3] See Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, pls 1–13.

incidence of canonization, provides a means of tracing the production that took place, as indeed it does everywhere. Although we have no knowledge of the procedures in a Sasanian mint, they cannot have been much different from those obtaining in mints in other countries of antiquity. In a passage which has only recently come to light in the *Kephalaia* of Mānī, the prophet and founder of Manichaeism, the writer very graphically compares the coining of the Word with the minting of a coin in its familiar sequence of processes from the preparation of the metal to the impression and issue of the completed coins.[1] As a favourite of Shāpūr I, Mānī was probably able to observe work in progress in the court mint. We have no knowledge of how the individual mints obtained their metal or of mining matters in Sasanian times, because modern conditions obviously would not be relevant, and the statements of the Arab geographers have not yet been evaluated. Besides this, a not inconsiderable proportion of the coinage metal was doubtless obtained by melting down earlier native or foreign currency, from booty and various other sources. This would no doubt also partially account for the relative rarity of early Sasanian coins. On the other hand, all minting is based on the observation of monetary circulation and the necessities of the state. Hence we are not entitled to assume regular and constant output in the case of any one mint. The many variations in mint signs alone indicate a wide fluctuation in production, for which wars are chiefly to blame. Under Shāpūr II, all payments to the troops were evidently put on a coinage basis, which presupposes an enormous increase in production. The alteration of the coinage as regards typology and character under Kavād I and Khusrau I was undoubtedly geared to the preparation and implementation of the taxation reform introduced by Khusrau I, in which all taxes were computed in terms of drachms. This was a measure which inevitably influenced the later Arab tax system. The fractional denominations in silver and copper were used for small transactions in the marketplace, and represented the typical alms gift, as is to be seen from the examples of *dāng* and *pashīz*. We have virtually no idea of Sasanian monetary circulation, due to the lack of an adequate number of relevant finds. With the conquest of Iran, huge quantities of Sasanian drachms everywhere came into the Arabs' hands, and the financial economy of Iran functioned at least partially on these for a full hundred years more.

[1] See R. Göbl, "Ein Bericht des Religionstifters Mani über die Münzherstellung", *AOAW* CIV (1967), pp. 113–32.

In late Umayyad and early ʿAbbasid times, finds of dirhams contain considerable numbers of Sasanian coins, whose unvarying quality renders Gresham's well-known law, whereby bad money drives the good from the market, inapplicable to Iran for some centuries; and this must be regarded in itself as a significant phenomenon in the field of numismatic history. Only a very few cases are known of coins of poor quality alloy; for example Shāpūr I restruck as drachms a quantity of Roman antoniniani (or double denarii), which were obviously plunder and were badly debased (about 50% silver); these, however, quickly disappear from the market. Other debased issues, which are principally known from the later reign of Hormizd IV, are probably not the work of coin-forgers, but are rather connected with the king's Turkish campaigns, since similar products are to be found in somewhat later mintings in the territory of the Iranian Huns, and of peoples related to them. The Hephthalite campaigns of Pērōz, which ceased temporarily with his capture, and were finally ended with his death, formed part of the 5th-century crisis that brought Iran to the brink of financial disaster because of the enormous sums demanded in tribute. First, the loss of large amounts of drachms for payment of the Central Asian auxiliaries by Shāpūr II, and then this tribute of Pērōz and his successors had long-lasting effects on the financial economy of these peoples. As the supply of replacement coinage ran out, they proceeded to their own mintings and imitated the currency to which they had grown accustomed, as regards both denominations and typology.

After their seizure of power, the Sasanians had suppressed all mintings from semi-independent regions of the empire which had survived under the Arsacids. But when, with the temporary conquest of the Kushān western empire under Shāpūr II and his immediate successors, including Bahrām IV, they entered a foreign currency area, they had to come to terms with it. Their handling of the problem had some quite ingenious features, combining a takeover of denominations and typology, efforts to settle their own currency in those areas, and the regular use of mixed typology (pl. 31 (1–5)). Although their rule there did not last long, the short period of occupation (about one generation) sufficed to protect the stock of "mixed" types they created against imitation by political successors. In passing, it should be mentioned that counter-marks are sometimes found on Sasanian coins from the 5th century onwards. These are marks relating to the validity of such coins as currency, i.e. its extension or restriction, and with only

very minor exceptions, they date from the post-Sasanian period. Since such marks were impressed on the coins by various political parties, they reflect power struggles which took place after the Arab conquest or attempts to come to terms with it, especially in east Iranian territory.

6. COIN TECHNOLOGY AND ART

The problems of Sasanian numismatic art are closely connected with those of technology. The increase in the diameter of the die for the production of broader but thinner coins resulted in a substantially higher load on the die, because the thin sheet silver from which the blanks or planchets had been cut no longer provided a cushioning effect as had previously been the case. The consequences were considerably more rapid wear, flaws and outbreaks, and lack of sharpness. Especially under Kavād I and Khusrau I, but also previously under Pērōz, enormous quantities of crudely-made and damaged dies were in use, being worked to death and rarely cut. Punches or hubs were probably used from the beginning for the essentials of the design, so that the engraver had only to insert details. At a later stage, and presumably as a result of thoroughgoing centralization which included the manufacture of dies, it would appear that more refined methods of quantity production were introduced. The extraordinary uniformity and similarity of the dies from widely separated mints can hardly be explained otherwise. In the later period, it is possible that, at least at certain stages, partly finished dies were sent to the individual mints, so that the local engravers merely had to incise the year of the reign and the sign of the mint. They would then undertake repairs and particularly the re-cutting of relief and contour, which would, for example, explain the continual increase in size of the heads in the reign of Khusrau II. Of course, the same thing could happen as a result of the continual spread of the head punches used to make the obverse dies. Re-cutting, which had hitherto merely been allowed to pass, now came to be an officially-prescribed makeshift technique, as for example in the aforementioned mint at Kabul, which was unable to get any more replacement dies and was only capable of producing new ones singly, and very crudely at that. Among the numerous Sasanian mints, the *BBA* (*BB*' = *dar* "door, court") mint, that is to say the court mint, always has a special style, particularly under Khusrau II. Most of the unsigned special strikings of the late period were in fact probably made there.

The high incidence of clumsily made coins under certain rulers from the 4th century on has given rise to adverse criticisms of the artistic value of Sasanian coins in general. This is very unfair, because for a true judgement, as in other fields, the best average productions must be considered alongside the peaks of achievement. Sasanian numismatic art is plainly all of a piece with other artistic productions under the dynasty; and hence, like these, it is not free of a certain naive monumentality, which sometimes slips into sheer clumsiness, but which in the finest work is by no means devoid of elegance. The strikings of the first Sasanians are of scarcely lower quality than the contemporary Roman ones and are, like these, in the best Hellenistic tradition. What is especially noticeable is the sudden raising of the artistic standard under the first Sasanians, who went back to the Hellenistic tradition of art in Mesopotamia and may well also have employed captured artists from the Roman east. From about the time of Bahrām V the coin portraits are in much shallower relief, just as the Roman ones are. A new and sometimes quite barbaric or at any rate formalized style, which is not occasionally without expressive quality, gains ascendancy, and the value of the pictures as portraits virtually disappears. In the twenties of the reign of Khusrau II, the second, albeit formalistic, renaissance of artistic styles begins, which has no need to fear comparison between its highest achievements and either the other achievements of late Sasanian art or the coins of the neighbouring Byzantine state. It lays the foundation for the development of later, non-pictorial, numismatic art under Islam.

APPENDIX I

KEY TO PLATES 25–32

Most of the coins illustrated have already been published elsewhere. The author wishes to renew his thanks to the respective owners for their kind permission to use the photographs for scholarly purposes.

Where no other reference is given, figures in brackets refer to the types (and where the symbol = is used, the identical items) in Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, pp. 75–81 and pls 1–16.

Other abbreviations are:

Dok. – Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Bactrien und Indien*, vols I and III.
De Morgan – the separate volume of plates accompanying Babélon, *Traité*, vol. III.
Bivar – Bivar, "The Kushano-Sasanian Coin Series".
Walker – Walker, *Arab-Sassanian coins.*
London – British Museum.
Berlin – Staatliche Museen.
Paris – Bibliothèque Nationale.
Chicago – University of Chicago Oriental Institute.
The Hague – Koninklijk Kabinet van Munten, Penningen en gesneden Stenen.
Delhi – National Museum of India.
BMC III – S. Lane-Poole, *The coins of the Turkumán houses of Seljook, Urtuk, Zengee, etc. in the British Museum* (London, 1877).

THE KINGS OF KINGS AND THEIR CROWNS

Plate 25

1. Ardashīr I (224–241). Drachm. Before A.D. 224. With his father Pāpak. (1). London.
2. Ardashīr I. Drachm. 1st crown. (6). Seen in commerce.
3. Ardashīr I. Drachm. 2nd crown. (10). London.
4. Ardashīr I. Drachm. 3rd crown. (= 14). Seen in commerce.
5. Ardashīr I. Drachm. 4th crown. (16). Coll. 'Azizbeglou.
6. Ardashīr I. Drachm. 5th crown. (18) (De Morgan, pl. XLIV (5)). Berlin.
7. Ardashīr I. Drachm. With his son Shāpūr I. (= 19). London.
8. Shāpūr I (241–272). Drachm. 1st crown. (23). London.
9. Shāpūr I. Drachm. 1st crown. (32). Coll. Göbl.
10. Shāpūr I. Drachm. Special crown. (34). London.
11. Hormizd I (272–273). Drachm. (= 36). Coll. 'Azizbeglou.
12. Bahrām I (273–276). Drachm. (= 41). London.

Plate 26

1. Bahrām II (276–293). Drachm. With his queen and crown prince. (= 64). Coll. Göbl.
2. Narseh (293–303). Drachm. 1st crown. (74). London.
3. Narseh. Drachm. 2nd crown. (= 76). Coll. Göbl.
4. Hormizd II (303–309). Drachm. (83). Coll. Göbl.
5. Shāpūr II (309–379). Drachm. Crown 1a. Mint (?) A. (= 97). Coll. Göbl.
6. Ardashīr II (379–383). Drachm. (= 122). Coll. 'Azizbeglou.
7. Shāpūr III (383–388). Drachm. (126). (= *Dok.* III, pl. 6 (VI/1)). London.
8. Bahrām IV (388–399). Drachm. Mint BBA ("court", Ctesiphon). (= 136). London.
9. Yazdgard I (399–420). Drachm. Mint AS (Aspahān). (= 147). The Hague.
10. Bahrām V (420–438). Drachm. Mint RD (Ray). (= 153). Coll. Conte Quaroni.
11. Yazdgard II (438–457). Drachm. Mint AW. (= 165). London.

Plate 27

1. Pērōz (459–484). Drachm. 1st crown. (167). The Hague.
2. Pērōz. Drachm. 2nd crown. Mint AB (Abarshahr, Nishāpūr). Year 5. (= 169). Coll. Conte Quaroni.
3. Pērōz. Drachm. 3rd crown. Mint AB. (= 175). Seen in commerce.
4. Balāsh (484–488). Drachm. Mint NB. (= 179). Paris.
5. Zāmāsp (497–499). Drachm. Mint ART (Ardašīr-xurrah) (= 181). London.
6. Kavād I (488–497; 499–531). Drachm. 1st crown. Mint ŠR. (= 183). Coll. Göbl.
7. Kavād I. Drachm. 2nd crown. Mint AW; Year 39. (= 190). Seen in commerce.
8. Khusrau I (531–572). Drachm. Mint HWC (Xūzistān-vāčār, Gundēshāpūr). Year 23. (= 196). Private Collection.

Plate 28

1. Hormizd IV (579–591). Drachm. Mint GZ. Year 10. (= 200). Seen in commerce.
2. Bahrām VI (590/1). Drachm. Mint MB. Year 1. (203). Coll. Göbl.
3. Vistahm (591/2–597?). Drachm. Mint RD (Ray). Year 6. (= 206). Coll. Göbl.
4. Khusrau II (591–628). Drachm. 1st crown. Mint BYŠ (Bīšāpūr). Year 1. (= 208). Coll. Göbl.
5. Khusrau II. Drachm. 2nd crown. Mint ST (Stakhr). Year 28. (212). Coll. Göbl.
6. Khusrau II. Drachm. On rev. goddess Anāhitā. 2nd crown. Mint unknown (BBA?). Year 37. (219). (*Dok.* III, pl. 7 (XIV/3)). London.

Plate 29

1. Kavād II (628). Drachm. Mint AYRAN (Ērān-xurrah-Šāpūr, Susa). Year 2. (223). Coll. Göbl.
2. Ardashīr III (628–630). Drachm. Mint GD. Year 2. Since lost.
3. Ardashīr III. Drachm. Mint AYRAN. Year 2. (= 226). Coll. Conte Quaroni.
4. Bōrān (630/1). Drachm. Mint ST (Staxr). Year 2. (= 228). Coll. 'Azizbeglou.
5. Āzarmīndōst (*c.* 631). Drachm. Mint WYHŠ (Veh-Ardašīr, Ctesiphon). Year 1. Coll. Mushīrī.
6. Khusrau III (V) (631–633?). Drachm. Mint WYHŠ. Year 2. (= 232). London.

Plate 30

1. Khusrau III (?) (631–633?). Drachm. Mint WYHC. Year 4. Coll. Göbl.
2. Hormizd V (631/2?). Drachm. Mint WYHC. Year 2. (230). American Numismatic Society.
3. Yazdgard III (632–651). Drachm. Mint SK (Sakastān, Sīstān). Year 8. (= 234). Coll. Conte Quaroni.

Other Sasanian denominations

4. Ardashīr I (224–241). Tetradrachm (billon). Coll. Gurnet.
5. Shāpūr I (241–272). Brass unit. (= 26). London.
6. Bahrām I (273–278). ¼ copper unit. Mint BBA. Coll. Göbl.
7. Alexandria (Egypt) under Khusrau II *c.* A.D. 619–629. 12 nummia (copper). (= 222). Coll. Göbl.
8. Khusrau II (591–628). Dīnār (gold). Mint unknown (BBA?). Year 23. (217) (*Dok.* III, pl. 7 (XIV/2)). Seen in commerce.
9. Yazdgard I (399–420). ⅓ Dīnār (gold). (= 152). London.
10. Shāpūr I. Half drachm. (= 24). London.
11. Shāpūr I. Obol. (= 25). Coll. Foroughi.

APPENDIX

THE SASANIANS IN EAST IRAN (KUSHANO-SASANIANS)

Plate 31

1. Hormizd Kūshānshāhānshāh (under Shāpūr II). Dīnār (gold; scyphate). (*Dok.* III, pl. 1 (9)). London.
2. Hormizd Kūshānshāhānshāh (under Shāpūr II). Dīnār (gold). Mint MLKy (*šāhigān*, i.e. mint of the court). (*Dok.* III, pl. 1 (11) = pl. 7 (XVII/1)). London.
3. Hormizd Kūshānshāhānshāh (under Shāpūr II). Drachm. Mint Herāt (?or Arachosia?). (*Dok.* III, pl. 7 (XIX/1)). Delhi.
4. Hormizd Kūshānshāhānshāh (under Shāpūr II). ⅛ copper unit. (Bivar 27b).
5. Shāpūr II (309–379). ¼ copper unit. (Bivar 32).

Arab Imitations

6. Khusrau II-type. Early imitation. Dirham. Mint DA (Dārābgird). Year 35. Coll. Szaivert.
7. Khālid b. ʻAbd-Allāh. Dirham. Mint BYŠ (Bīšāpūr). Year 74 A.H. (Walker, 214, p. 108; Gaube, Prägetabelle, 18.1/15.2/74). Coll. Dr Lindpaintner.
8. Ṭabaristān. ʻAbbāsid governors. ʻUmar ibn al-ʻAlāʼ. Half-dirham. 122 Tab. era = 157 A.H. = A.D. 773 (Walker – – –; Gaube, Prägetabelle, 06 A/122). Coll. Göbl.
9. Bukhārā. Intermediate coinage. A.D. 632–634. Dirham. (Walker, p. 163, pl. XXVIII. b.2). Coll. Göbl.
10. Urtuqids of Kaifā and Āmid. Quṭb al-Dīn Sukmān II (1185–1200). Dirham (copper). Mint: al-Ḥiṣn (Kaifā). Year 581 A.H./A.D. 1185. *BMC* III, 338, p. 128.

HUNNISH IMITATIONS OF THE SASANIAN DRACHM-TYPE

Plate 32

1. Kidārites. Kidāra (time of Shāpūr III). Drachm. (*Dok.* I, Em. 11, no. 7). London.
2. Kidārites. Unknown king (time of Shāpūr III). Drachm. (*Dok.* I, Em. 19, no. 1). Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
3. Alxon. Khiṅgila. 5th cent. A.D. Drachm. After A.D. 460. (*Dok.* I, Em. 73). Coll. W. Warden jr.
4. Nezak *MLKʼ* (*šāh*). Drachm. 6th cent. A.D. Mint Kabul. (*Dok.* I, Em. 198). Bern, Historisches Museum. Cat. Göbl. no. 561.
5. Hephthalites. Drachm. About A.D. 500. Mint Balkh. (*Dok.* I, Em. 287, no. 1). Coll. Göbl.
6. Later Huns. Vahi Tigin. Drachm. A.D. 728. Mint Kabul. (*Dok.* I, Em. 208). Coll. W. Warden jr.
7. Later Huns (after re-emigration from India). Drachm (copper). After A.D. 600. Mint Ghazni. (*Dok.* I, Em. 231, no. 8). London.
8. Later Huns. Vakhudevaḥ. Drachm about A.D. 720. Mint Ghazni. (*Dok.* I, Em. 244, no. 16). Coll. Conte Quaroni.

PART III

IRANIAN HISTORICAL TRADITION

The Sasanians were in possession of an historical tradition which had its roots in remote antiquity and had taken shape chiefly through oral transmission. It contained stories of mythical kings and sagas of legendary princes and noble warriors, as well as factual history. This tradition, which found its fullest expression in the *Khwadāy-nāmag* of Sasanian times, was based on an outlook born of Iranian religious, social and political developments, and employed norms and premises different from those underlying modern historical research.

The Iranian outlook and its religious foundations are presented in Chapter 10*a*; Chapter 10*b* examines the mythical, legendary and factual history of Iran, as it developed in the native historical tradition, in three parts: the first part discusses the characteristic features of this tradition; the second, the origin and development of Iranian myths and legends; and the third, the treatment of factual history in traditional historiography. Editor.

CHAPTER 10(*a*)

IRANIAN COMMON BELIEFS AND WORLD-VIEW

To be fully comprehensible, Iranian myths and legends and the subsequent development of the Iranian historical tradition must be studied in the context of the Iranian world-view. The Avestan material, although presented in a Zoroastrian redaction, preserves many of the Iranian beliefs which were inherited from remote antiquity and persisted in Iran throughout the Sasanian period. Pahlavī books, too, despite their late composition, have kept for us an essentially pre-Zoroastrian set of beliefs concerning cosmology and the nature of corporeal creation.[1] On the basis of the Avesta, the Rig-Veda, and the conservative Pahlavī literature, it is possible to arrive at an approximation of the development of the Iranian world-view from pagan times to the advent of Islam.

DIVINE BEINGS AND THEIR ALLIES

The Indo-Iranian people believed in a number of gods, mostly symbolizing forces or aspects of nature, who wielded great power over natural events, as well as over man's destiny.[2] A discussion of the Iranian pantheon or Iranian demonology is outside the scope of this chapter.[3] The following remarks are meant to provide only the necessary background in cosmology against which the mythical and legendary history of Iran developed.

Already in pagan times, social development and ethical considerations had given rise to the concept of deities who personified or represented abstract ideas or moral values. Mitra (Av. Mithra), one of the great Indo-Iranian gods, was a protector of pacts and promises, and Varuṇa, another powerful god, had in his charge *ṛta* (Old Pers. *arta*, Av. *aša*), the universal order based on truth. Gods were worshipped through ritual sacrifice and prayer in order to ensure their favour and gain their protection. Different orders of deities were worshipped. The most important distinction was between the *asura*s (Av. *ahura*) and the

[1] Cf. Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 131.

[2] For a discussion of Iranian deities see Gray, 16ff.; Lommel, *Religion*, 10ff., 255ff.; Gershevitch, *Hymn to Mithra*, Intro.; Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 2f.

[3] See *CHI* II.

devas (Av. *daēva*, Old Pers. *daiva*). The asuras, who included Mitra and Varuṇa, were beneficent, mighty gods in possession of a magical power called *māyā*, which they brought to bear on the administration of the world.[1] The devas appear to have been somewhat amoral beings, endowed with great physical strength; their chief representative was a mighty war god, Vərəthraghna in Iran and Indra in India.[2]

In addition, the Indo-Iranian pantheon included nature deities who symbolized the sun, the moon, and other luminaries, water, fire, wind, and the sky. Particularly prominent among these deities in Iran was the goddess of the waters, Arədvī Sūrā, originally perhaps a river divinity, who is celebrated in the Ābān Yasht of the Avesta and to whom many Iranian heroes offered sacrifice.

Cult gods, concerned with ritual worship, were another order of divine beings venerated by the Indo-Iranians. Chief among these was Soma (Av. Haoma). He represented a plant of the same name, whose exhilarating juice, obtained through pounding and pressing the stalks, was widely used in the worship and was offered to the gods in sacrificial rituals. As the divine priest of sacrifice, Soma came to symbolize some aspects of the sacrifice itself.

In the Zoroastrianism of the Yashts,[3] the Iranian pantheon is dominated by Ahurā Mazdā, the supreme god and creator of the world and of all the other gods. Individual deities, however, retain their characters and powers. They can aid those who worship them or frustrate and punish those who reject them. Thus they receive lavish sacrifices accompanied by requests for blessings. Mithra and Arədvi Sūrā remain prominent, and the *fravašis* and the *xvarənah* continue to be important factors in human life as well as in world events.

The fravašis. Like the Indian *pitaras*, the fravašis were the souls of the departed, and their cult may have had its origin in a form of ancestor worship.[4] Bailey has suggested an etymology which would indicate that they were originally the departed spirits of heroes and that later the concept was enlarged to include all mortals – dead, born, and unborn.[5] The fravašis were conceived as invisible, powerful beings who could assist their kinsmen and ward off harm from them if properly commemorated with offerings and prayers. In the Farvardīn Yasht,

[1] Oldenburg, 15ff.
[2] See Benveniste and Renou, *Vṛta et Vṛθragna*, 177ff.
[3] Cf. Gershevitch, *Hymn to Mithra*, 13ff.
[4] For a discussion of the fravašis see Soderblom, "Les Fravashis", *RHR* XXXIX (1899), 229–60, 373–418; Moulton, 271; Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.*, II. 91ff,; Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.*, I. 117ff.
[5] *Problems*, 109.

which is dedicated to them, only the fravašis of the righteous are invoked.[1]

The xvarənah. Variously translated as Divine Fortune, Grace, or Glory, the xvarənah (Mid. Pers. *farrah*, Pers. *farr*) was conceived as a blessing bestowed from above, usually by Aši, the goddess of wealth and recompense.[2] Originally, it appears to have meant the good things given to mortals by the gods, but the concept was also hypostasized as a deity. As a divine gift, it accompanied men and women favoured by the gods, and it afforded them power and prosperity. The Zamyād Yasht, although dedicated to the Earth, in fact celebrates the xvarənah as possessed by gods, prophets, and great heroes of Iranian myth and legend.

The xvarənah is one of the most enduring concepts of Iranian tradition and figures prominently in the national history. No king could rule successfully without it. It was only by virtue of the xvarənah that the mighty achieved fame and glory. Its presence brought success and symbolized legitimacy. Its absence changed men's fortunes, indicating divine disfavour and often auguring imminent fall or defeat. The xvarənah was frequently conceived as an image, such as a ray of light or a bird. As the Fortune of the Iranian kings, it was called the Royal Glory (*Kavaēm xvarənah*) and became identified with the Glory of Iran (*Airyanəm xvarənah*). It was also sought by hostile forces and the enemies of the Aryan people as a guarantee of success. When Yima succumbed to the Lie, the xvarənah departed from him in the shape of a bird and passed into the possession of Mithra. Aži Dahāka attempted to capture it, but it was saved by Fire and escaped into the mythical Vourukaša Sea, whereupon it fell under the protection of the god Apąm Napāt. Afrāsiyāb plunged into the water three times, striving to capture it, but each time he failed.[3]

The xvarənah must have had a special place in the accounts of the kings in the *Khwadāy-nāmag* as an expression of divine will or favour. This is often reflected in Islamic sources, particularly in the *Shāh-nāma*, where many rises and falls of kings are explained in terms of the presence or absence of the xvarənah. Yima is defeated by Dahāk when the xvarənah departs from him. Tūs and Gustahm, sons of king Naudhar, are barred from kingship on the ground that they lacked the xvarənah.

[1] See pp. 414ff. for further detail.

[2] For a discussion of the xvarənah see Bailey, *Problems*, 1–77; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Le Xuarənah", *AION* v (1963) 19–31; Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 66–8.

[3] See further p. 414.

Kai Kavād is hailed as king precisely because he is endowed with this gift.[1]

The Holy Immortals. As a result of the Zoroastrian reform another group of divine beings, the chief Aməša Spəntas (the "Bounteous, or Holy,[2] Immortals"), rose to prominence. Six in number, and representing the aspects of Ahurā Mazdā, they personify primarily the ethical concepts of Zoroastrianism: Vohu Manah "Good Mind", Aša Vahišta "Highest Truth", Xšathra Vairya "Desirable Dominion", Spənta Ārmaiti "Bounteous Devotion", Haurvatāt "Health", and Amərətāt "Life". The six Holy Immortals, together with Ahurā Mazdā, who headed them and also represented them in their totality, were in charge of the seven "creations" of the Old Iranian world picture. Thus they were intimately involved in physical phenomena, in the course of human life, and in religious observances.

A variety of fabulous creatures who are either helpful or harmful to man are known in the Iranian myths.[3] They are also met in the Avesta, the Pahlavī books, and the folk epics of Persian literature. Important among them, and conspicuous in the *Shāh-nāma* and in Persian literature, is the Saēna bird (Av. Saēna mərəgha, Mid. Pers. Sēn-murv, Pers. Sēmurgh, Sīmurgh) mentioned in the Avesta[4] and elaborated in the Pahlavī books.[5] Its resting place, according to Yasht 12.17, is on the fabulous tree which is in the middle of the Vourukaša Sea and which bears the seeds of all plants and healing herbs. It is by the beating of the Sēmurgh's wings that the seeds of this tree are scattered, to be carried by wind and rain over all the earth. In the *Shāh-nāma*, the Sēmurgh is depicted as a huge eagle with magical powers, which has its nest on top of a high mountain. It rears Zāl and helps Rustam defeat Isfandiyār. It is not certain, however, whether this is the same bird as the one described in the Avesta. Since the legends of Zāl and Rustam are probably of Saka origin,[6] and in any event from a different region than the birthplace of the Avesta, it is likely either that two different miraculous birds have coalesced in name or that different myths were attached to the bird in different regions. Another legendary bird is Karshiptar, which, according to the *Vendidād* 2.24, spread the good religion in Yima's underground fortress.

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, pp. 27, 279, 290.
[2] Cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, pp. 21ff.; Insler, *Gāthās*, 117, who translates *spenta* by "virtuous".
[3] See Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 88ff., for a listing and description of these creatures.
[4] Yashts 12.17; 14.41.
[5] *Bundahishn* xiii. 23; *Mēnōg ī Khrad* lxii. 37–9; *Zātsparam* iii. 39.
[6] See pp. 454–5.

FALSE GODS, DEMONS, AND MALICIOUS SPIRITS

The Indo-Iranians believed not only in beneficent gods and spirits but in a number of hostile supernatural beings and malignant spirits. To avert the threats to human life posed by the inimical hosts, acts of propitiation, ritual incantations, banning formulas, and appeals to the benevolent deities were practised.

The ways of religious thinking in India and Iran, however, did not keep to the same path for long. In Iran, religious deliberation, prompted presumably by social, political, and economic circumstances, led to a distinct schism in the Indo-Aryan pantheon. Whereas *deva* continued as the designation of gods among the Indo-Aryans, in Iran the *daēva*s were branded as gods who opposed the well-being of man and were thus unworthy of worship. Zoroaster conceived them to be the principal agents of evil and, as adverse gods, the targets of his denunciation. Subsequently they sank to the rank of mere demons. It is not possible to determine with certainty the phases of this development in terms of time, or to say how much of it was due to Zoroaster's reform. From the Gāthās it appears that in his day some Iranian tribes worshipped the daēvas or practised their propitiation. T. Burrow has put forth a strong argument in favour of assuming these to have been chiefly the "Proto-Indoaryans", of whom some had already migrated to India, but others still occupied parts of eastern Iran and against them Zoroaster and his supporters waged war[1] – a view essentially expressed by L. Gray in 1927.[2]

In Zoroastrian teachings the demons and other malicious creatures – all followers of Drug, "Falsehood" – became ever more sharply contrasted with divine beings and acted desperately against the men who had chosen Aša, "Truth". Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), the uncreated opponent of Ahurā Mazdā, was the creator of all the demons.[3] The particular targets of divine wrath in the Avesta, the demons were slain by the thousands at the hands of various deities, the fravašis, and Iranian heroes. Through sacrifice, prayer, and magical incantation, the believers sought to neutralize or destroy them. The Zoroastrian confession of faith, the *Fravarānē* (Yasna 12), abounds in abjuration of

1 "Proto-Indoaryans", pp. 126ff.

2 L. H. Gray, "The 'Ahurian' and 'Daevian' vocabularies in the Avesta", *JRAS* 1927, p. 439.

3 For a discussion of Iranian demonology see Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* II. 126–41; Gray, "Foundations", 175–219; Lommel, *Religion*, 74ff.; Christensen, *Démonologie*; and Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.*, I. 85–108. Cf. also p. 920, below.

demons.[1] The opening words of this confession as it stands now – "I curse the demons" – although a later addition,[2] testifies only to the growing abhorrence of the demons by the Zoroastrians. Of the host of demons only Aēšma, the demon of Wrath, is mentioned in the Gāthās.[3] Drug, "the Lie, Deceit" as the counterpart of Aša, and as a generic term, is a personification of an ethical concept referring to the multitude of demonic creatures who lurk everywhere, bent on turning man away from the right path and determined to corrupt the world. A number of individual demons who, like *yazata*s, "divine beings" (lit. "worthy of worship"; Mid. Pers. *yazad*; Pers. *īzad*), have special functions are named in the Yashts. In the *Vidēvdād*, "the Law against Demons", which is particularly concerned with the pollution inflicted by Nasu, the Demon of Death, several other demons are mentioned. Three fallen Indo-Iranian deities, Indra, Naŋhaithya (Ved. Nāsatya), and Sauvra (Ind. Śarva), are listed among the demons.[4] In a compensating effort Ahriman created demonic counterparts to each of Ohrmazd's creations and an arch-fiend against each Aməša Spənta.[5] In the Pahlavī books, in particular the *Bundahishn*, many more demons are named.

The demons were visualized in different shapes: some, like Nasu, as insects, others, like Apaoša, the Demon of Drought, in animal shapes, and still others as serpentine monsters and as dragons of various descriptions. But most were thought, in later traditions, to have deformed and monstrous human shapes.

Sasanian historiography reflects belief in demons, and accordingly they have a conspicuous place in the *Shāh-nāma*. The primaeval kings are constantly at war with the demons, whom they hold to be the foremost enemies of men, and their greatness consists partly in breaking and subduing these foes. Kərəsāspa is the conqueror and slayer of many a monster,[6] as are Rustam, Isfandiyār, and other heroes. Even Ardashīr is credited with the destruction of the dragon Haftvād[7] (Haftānbukht in the *Kārnāmag ī Ardashīr*).[8] Demons can change shape and make use of magical power. It is a fiend who, in the form of a skilful musician, persuades Kāvūs to undertake the disastrous Māzandarān expedition,[9] while another fiend, in the shape of an attractive young man, urges him to make the flight into the skies.[10] The *Shāh-nāma* also has a fiend, in the

[1] See Christensen, *Demonologie*, 8; Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.*, I. 252–3.

[2] See K. Hoffmann, "Zur avestischen Textkritik" in M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch (eds), *Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), 196–7.

[3] Yasnas 29.2; 30.6; 48.12.

[4] *Vidēvdād* 10.9.

[5] *Bundahishn* i. 47–9, 55.

[6] See pp. 429ff.

[7] *Shāh-nāma*, pp. 1879ff.

[8] Ed. Antia, 25ff.

[9] *Shāh-nāma*, p. 316.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 409ff.

guise of a brilliant cook, who causes the notorious snakes to grow on Dahāk's shoulders.[1] The most conspicuous demon in the *Shāh-nāma*, however, is the White Demon (Dēv-i Safīd), who is defeated and killed by Rustam in an extraordinary feat of courage and strength.[2] As Nöldeke has pointed out, the legend may have preserved vestigial memories of a war between eastern Iranians and a tribe, in the Caspian region or elsewhere, who worshipped daēva-gods, possibly of light[3] – hence the epithet "white". The legend of Rustam's slaying of the Demon Akvān, cast in the frame of a popular tale by Firdausī, may be another such vestige.

Apart from daēvas, there were other spirits who inhabited the world and threatened man with harm. Chief among these were the *yātū*s, originally demons, who, when later the daēvas were degraded to demons, came to be designated sorcerers. The antiquity of this notion is suggested by the occurrence of these spirits in Indian literature also.[4] *Pairikā*s are female beings of malicious nature, once associated in the Avesta with shooting stars,[5] and later considered for all practical purposes to be sorceresses. In the Yashts they are often mentioned with the yātūs and are assailed by gods and heroes.[6] As they often posed as beautiful women in popular stories, they came to be regarded in Sasanian Persia, but more particularly in post-Sasanian literature (Pers. *parī*), as the epitome of charm and beauty.[7]

THE WORLD AND ITS CREATION

In pagan antiquity various myths about the creation of the world and the nature of the universe evidently existed, as their traces can be found in both the Vedas and the Avesta, as well as in the Pahlavī books. It appears that even before Zoroaster a good deal of systematization had taken place, and a coherent world picture had already evolved.[8] It is

[1] Pp. 28ff. [2] Pp. 315ff.

[3] *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* XVIII (Leipzig, 1915), 597ff.; Christensen, *Démonologie*, 62.

[4] See Oldenberg, 265ff.

[5] Yasht, 8.8. See J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Les composés de l'Avesta* (Paris, 1936), §103 (p. 71) for a possible etymology which may confirm their origin as shooting stars.

[6] Yashts 1.6; 6.4; 10.26, 34; 11.6; 12.104.

[7] For the theory according to which pairikās rejected by Zoroaster were originally female deities associated with fertility, and that their emergence later as "fairies" and paragons of beauty preserves traces of pre-Zoroastrian beliefs, see B. Sarkārātī, *Majilla-yi Dānishkada-yi Adabiyyāt...Tabriz* XXIII (1971), pp. 1–32.

[8] This section owes much to the admirable treatment of the subject in Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 130ff.

obvious that an attempt was made to trace the diverse species and phenomena to a single origin in order to make intelligible the chaotic world of change and variation. Zoroaster, being essentially a moral thinker, probably did not initiate any radical formulation of thought about the nature of the universe and its origin. It is clear, however, that his ethical dualism, his investing of Ahurā Mazdā with greater power than before, and his particular vision of the rôle played by the Evil Spirit gave the older beliefs a new perspective and made the creation myths the instrument of a freshly conceived ethical order. The Pahlavī books, in particular the *Bundahishn*, which is mainly concerned with creation and the nature of the visible world, have preserved a wealth of pertinent tradition and beliefs which must have been inherited chiefly from pre-Zoroastrian times.

According to the *Bundahishn*,[1] the universe was created in seven stages, in the following order: the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, man, and fire – an order which is confirmed by the Avesta.[2] A more sophisticated scheme, however, according to which Ahurā Mazdā brought forth fire out of the Endless Light, ether (*vād*) out of fire, water out of ether, and all matter from water, except the seed of man and animals, which was made from the essence of fire, appears in another passage of the *Bundahishn*.[3] But this version of creation no doubt reflects a later view, developed by subsequent priestly speculations. It strikes one as more philosophical than mythical, seeking as it does a single origin for the diversity of nature and possibly incorporating some foreign influences.

The sky[4] was conceived as a round, hard vault, made of bright precious stone (i.e. rock crystal, sometimes referred to as "shining metal"),[5] which encircled the earth. Water filled the lower part of the sphere of the sky and passed beneath the earth.[6] The view that the earth was created in three stages[7] apparently served to account for its hard core, its soft crust of soil, and the layer in between. Mountains grew from the earth like trees with "roots"[8] underground. The greatest of these mountains was the high Harā (Av. Harā.bərəzaitī, Mid. Pers. Harburz, Pers. Alburz) which encompassed the earth and kept growing, according to the *Bundahishn* (ix. 1–2), for 800 years, until it passed the regions of the stars, the moon, and the sun and reached the highest

[1] i a. 4–21; cf. i. 55; cf. *Zātsparam* i. 20. [2] Yasht 13.2ff. [3] i a. 2–3.

[4] On the myths concerning the sky and its etymology, see Bailey's standard study in *Problems*, 120–48. [5] Yasht 13.2; Bailey, *op. cit.*, 127–8.

[6] *Bundahishn* i a. 10. [7] *Bundahishn* i a. 9. [8] *Ibid.*, vi c. 1.

heaven. Other mountains grew from it, numbering in all 2,244.[1] Like the Indians, the Iranians believed in seven climes (Av. *karšvar*, Pers. *kishvar*), which came into being when the rain first fell and broke the earth into seven pieces. In the centre was Xvaniratha (Mid. Pers. Khwanirah),[2] the fairest clime of all and equal in size to all the other karšvars put together.

In Xvaniratha lay Airyanəm Vaējah (Mid. Pers. Ērān Vēj), the land of the Iranians. In the *Vidēvdād* 1.2, this country is described as the first and the best of dwelling-places and lands. A legendary region at the centre of the world, it was seen by the Iranians as the seat of all major phenomena and world events. The river Veh Dāitī flowed through it, and both the primordial Bull and Gayōmard[3] were created in it. In the first chapter of the *Vidēvdād*, where it heads the list of countries created by Ahurā Mazdā, Airyanəm Vaējah is described as having a winter of ten months' and a summer of two months' duration.

In the middle of Xvaniratha stood a lofty mountain which had grown up from Harā and was called the Peak (Av. Taēra; Mid. Pers. Tērag) of high Harā, sometimes itself referred to simply as Harā. It was believed that the stars, the moon and the sun, which were imagined to be below the vault of the sky, had their orbit around the Peak of Harā.[4] According to the Mithra Yasht 51–2, Ahurā Mazdā, together with the Aməša Spəntas, made a dwelling for Mithra on high Harā, "where comes neither night or darkness, no cold or hot wind, no deadly illness, no defilement made by the daēvas, and the clouds cannot reach up". From high Harā, Mithra watches over the whole world. There are 180 windows on the eastern side of the Peak and 180 on the western side. Each day at dawn the sun enters one of the windows on the east and circles back through a western window. Later Harā was identified with the mountain now called Alburz, and its major peak, Demāvand, is the scene of a number of mythical and legendary events in the national tradition. It was here that Frēdōn chained and imprisoned Dahāk, and it was in the Alburz mountains that Rustam discovered Kai Kavād. Precisely which mountain Harā was originally meant to indicate is hard to say. Such an identification would depend on the antiquity of the myth and the region that the Iranians occupied when the myth developed.

Harā is also the source of the waters.[5] The mythical sea Vourukaša

[1] *Ibid.*, ix. 3; cf. Geiger, 42. It will be noted that Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature contains much that belongs to popular religion and lore.

[2] *Bundahishn* viii. 1. See Gershevitch, *Hymn to Mithra*, 176, for an etymology.

[3] See pp. 416ff.

[4] Yasht 12.25.

[5] *Bundahishn* x. 1.

[Mid. Pers. Varkash or Frākh(w)kard] which skirts the foot of Harā, occupies one-third of the earth.[1] Water flows down into the sea from the Peak of Harā in the river Arədvī Sūrā, which is as large as all other rivers put together.[2] Two rivers, the Vaŋhvi Dāityā "Good Dāityā" (Mid. Pers. Veh Dāitī or Veh Rōd) and the Raŋha (Mid. Pers. Arang), flow out of Vourukaša, one to the east and the other to the west, forming the eastern and western boundaries of Xvaniratha.[3]

The identification of the rivers, lakes, mountains, and place names in Iranian myths and legends has been the subject of considerable discussion among scholars. For instance, the river Raŋha has been identified variously as the Indus,[4] Jaxartes,[5] Tigris,[6] the Volga,[7] the Zarafshān River in Sogdiana,[8] and even the Nile.[9] In the Pahlavī books one encounters contradictory statements, which indicate shifting identifications by the Iranians themselves.[10] Ērān Vēj seems to have been identified at about the time of Zoroaster with Chorasmia,[11] and Harā has long been identified with the present Alburz chain. But one must bear in mind, as Boyce points out,[12] that it would be of little profit to speculate about the original mountain, river, or land which may lie behind these names since one cannot be certain of the location of the Iranian tribes when the names came into use. Furthermore, like most migrants, the early Iranians seem to have applied old names to new places.

What appears to be a more primitive myth than the myth of the creation of plants as the fourth creation, concerns a tree, referred to in the Rashn Yasht 17 as the Tree of All Remedies or the Saēna tree,[13] which was said to grow in the middle of the Vourukaša Sea. It is described in the *Vidēvdād* 5.19 as the well-watered tree upon which grow plants of every kind, by hundreds, by thousands, by hundreds of thousands.

The fifth creation, animal life, had its origin in the Bull Uniquely Created (Av. *Gāv aēvo.dāta*; Mid. Pers. *Gāv ī ēvdād*), which was brought forth in Ērān Vēj, in the middle of the earth, on the bank of the river Veh Dāitī. He is described as "white bright as the moon, with the

[1] *Ibid.* [2] Yashts 5.3; 13.6. [3] *Bundahishn* xi. 1.
[4] Windischmann, 188. [5] Geiger, 34–41.
[6] Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta* II. 15, n. 44.
[7] Marquart, *Webrōt und Arang*, 133ff.; Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du vendidad*, 56; Ghirshman, 73–4. [8] See Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, 148.
[9] See the *Bundahishn* xi. 1; Spiegel, *Erān. Alterth.* I. 195.
[10] Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 146.
[11] Henning, *Zoroaster*, 42f.; cf. Gershevitch, *Hymn to Mithra*, 174–6; Benveniste, "L'Ērānvēz". [12] *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 143f. [13] See above, p. 345.

height of three measured reeds".[1] His death, probably through sacrifice by the gods, resulted in the emergence of new life.[2] A portion of the Bull's seed was taken to the moon to be purified. From it came into being all the species of beneficent animals. The other part of his seed fell on the earth and gave rise to many kinds of useful plants.

The sixth creation was Gayō.marətan (Mid. Pers. *Gayōmard*, and in the *Shāh-nāma* Kayōmarth) "Mortal Life", who is said to be as "bright as the sun" and to measure the same in height and width.[3] He was stationed on the left bank of the river Veh Dāitī, opposite the Bull. In the Zoroastrian version of the myth, both the Bull and Gayōmard perish as a result of Ahriman's onslaught upon the world of Ohrmazd. Gayōmard's seed, which was purified by the sun's light, was partly entrusted to Narisah (Av. Nairyo.saŋha, Pers. Narsē), a god of prayer associated with Fire and Mithra, and partly received by Spandārmad (Av. Spənta.Ārmaiti), the Earth. From the part that was entrusted to the earth sprang, after forty years, a rhubarb plant that developed into Mashya and Mashyāna, the first human couple.

The position of fire in the scheme of creation is manifestly ambiguous. While fire is sometimes referred to as the seventh creation,[4] on occasion it is not counted with the others at all. It was believed that fire derived its brightness from the Endless Light, the abode of Ohrmazd,[5] and that it pervaded all other beings. The seed of both man and animals was said to derive from it. "The fully evolved doctrine may well have been", writes Mary Boyce, "that this element first passed into the being of the six creations proper when these became animated, forming, as it were, their life force."[6]

The cosmic conflict. With the spread of Zoroaster's teachings, the inherited world picture of the Iranians assumed a new colouring. In priestly schools the diverse elements of myth and reality were brought together and combined into a scheme characterized by an ethical thrust. The essence of the scheme was the fierce opposition between good and evil. The universe was now pictured as a battlefield of the two primeval forces, with man as an active and important factor in the outcome. Creation assumed a moral purpose and the course of history – past, present, and future – was visualized with clarity as part of an orderly programme, the direction and main features of which had been determined at the outset. In broad outline, world history was in fact no more

[1] *Bundahishn* i a. 12.
[2] See below, p. 418.
[3] *Bundahishn* i a. 13.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 7.
[5] *Ibid.*, i a. 6.
[6] *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 141.

than a realization of the vision of Ohrmazd when his omniscience permitted him to perceive, at the beginning, the events of the future until the time of Ahriman's annihilation. Future history was viewed with as much certainty as the past.

The most detailed account of world events according to the above scheme, with a basis in Iranian cosmology, is found in the *Bundahishn*.[1] According to this work, Ohrmazd, in his all-knowing wisdom, realized the existence of Ahriman and foresaw his attack, as well as the period of intermingling (*gōmēzishn*) which would follow. He also realized that in the end victory would be his. To prepare for the defence of his realm and for final victory, first he created the cosmos: the six Holy Immortals, the other yazads, the elements and astral bodies, all in a spiritual state (*pad mēnōgīh*). For 3,000 years the world remained in this state, without movement, thought, or tangible substance. The time was fixed at noon, and peace and serenity prevailed. Ahriman, rising from his abyss of total darkness, caught sight of the Light and the luminous nature of Ohrmazd's world. True to his destructive nature, he invaded it. But faced with the valour and fortitude of Ohrmazd, he rushed back to his abyss and fashioned (*karīnīd*, "miscreated") many demons (dīvs) and death-dealers, then rose for battle. Ohrmazd, knowing the outcome, offered him peace, with a promise of immortality and freedom from hunger and thirst, if he would withdraw and offer praise to Ohrmazd's creatures. When Ahriman refused, Ohrmazd realized that if he did not fix a limit for the duration of the battle, he would place himself at a disadvantage. Therefore, he suggested 9,000 years as the length of the contest. Ahriman, with his lack of foresight, agreed to this covenant, and Ohrmazd revealed to him the outcome of their battle and recited the potent Ahunavairyō prayer. Ahriman, struck by the power of the prayer, was stunned, and fell back once more into the depths of darkness, lying in a stupor for 3,000 years.

During these 3,000 years Ohrmazd created the visible world (*gētīg*) as a defence against the forthcoming attack of Ahriman. Within one year of 360 days, he created in succession the sky, water, the earth, plants (*urvar*), beneficial animals (*gōspand*), man, and fire.[2] Then he created the fixed and the moving stars, the moon, and the sun, arranging and organizing them in ranks and positions for battle with the Adversary.[3] Further, he assigned each creature its rôle during that battle and placed each class of creature in the charge of one of the six Holy

[1] i–iii. [2] *Bundahishn* i. 54. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 1–20.

Immortals: Ohrmazd himself took charge of man, Vahman of animals, Ardvahišt (Av. Ašavahišta) of fire, Shahrēvar of metal, Spandārmad of the earth, Hordād of water, and Amurdād of plants.[1]

While Ahriman was lying in stupor, several of his demons tried to cheer him up and urge him to action. But only Jeh, the arch-whore, succeeded at the end of 3,000 years in rousing him out of his fright by promising to defile all manner of creatures.[2] At noon, on the first day of the first month (day Ohrmazd of the month Farvardīn), Ahriman invaded the world of Ohrmazd, inflicting damage and wreaking havoc in every direction. He pierced and darkened the sky, spoiled the taste of water, let loose noxious creatures over the earth, withered plants, attacked both the primeval Bull and Gayōmard with greed, want, pain, hunger, disease, vice and neglect, and mingled smoke with fire. Then Gāv and Gayōmard, both afflicted, passed away, the latter after lingering for thirty years. The battle raged ferociously, with the yazads, the constellations, stars, the moon, and the sun trying to ward off the demons. After ninety days, the demons were reduced and thrown back into hell,[3] but not before they had disfigured and corrupted the universe, bringing the world to its present "mixed state".[4]

The third phase of world history consists of the next 3,000 years, a period of admixture, divided into three millennia. The first millennium sees the rise of Pishdadian world kings and their continual battle against the dīvs. The second millennium is entirely taken up by the tyrannical rule of the monstrous Dahāk. The third is devoted largely to the reign of the Kayanians and the Irano-Turanian wars; the advent of Zoroaster heralds its close; and it ends with the conversion of Gushtāsp (see below for the events of this period).

Eschatology. The final phase of the world's history, also a period of admixture, is likewise divided into three millennia, at the end of each of which a future son of Zoroaster will appear as a Messiah to help the cause of the good religion and to ensure the defeat of its enemies. They are to be born of the seed of the prophet, which is preserved in Lake Frazdān, in Sīstān, and watched over by a large number of the fravašis of righteous men. At the appointed time destined maidens will bathe in the lake, receive the seed, and give birth to the successive Saviours. The last one, the Sōšyant (Saviour) *par excellence*, appears at the end of the

[1] *Ibid.*, iii. 13–24. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 4. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 27.

[4] The time-span of the world in Iranian myths may have been originally shorter, as some sources convey the impression of 6,000 or 9,000 years. The extension to 12,000 divided into four periods of 3,000, seems to betray Babylonian influences.

third millennium to bring about the dissolution of the admixture and the renovation of all existence.

In the Gāthās the older form of the word, *saošyant*, "benefactor, helper", is used mostly as a general term which seems to refer to those men in the future who would help bring about the Renovation (*frašō.kərəta*, Mid. Pers. *frashagird*). In the Yashts, the doctrine of the Saviour is more explicit: Astvat.ərəta, the victorious Sōšyant, will come accompanied by his helpers and by the xvarənah, to purify the world and to bring immortality. He emerges from Lake Kyānsīh (Av. Kasaoya, identified with Lake Hāmūn in Sīstān), brandishing the weapons which Thraētaona used to slay Aži Dahāka, which Fraŋrasyan wielded to smite Zainigav, which Kavi Haosravah carried against Fraŋrasyan, and which Kavi Vištāspa held to avenge Aša. He will conquer and drive out the Drug (the Lie) from the world of Aša (Truth).[1] But the Avesta does not know more than this about the Sōšyant. Later, it seems, the millennial view of history in conjunction with knowledge of the three sons born naturally to the prophet, who are mentioned in the Avesta, gave rise to the concept of triplicate Sōšyants, each of which would appear at the end of one of the last three millennia.

The coming of the Sōšyant and the events of the final phase of the world are already sketched in the Zamyād Yasht (vv. 89–96). They are elaborated in the Pahlavī books of the 9th century,[2] which display many differences in detail but agree in the main. The fullest version is found in the Zand ī Vahman Yasht, which is based on the now lost Vahman Yasht. The Muslim conquest no doubt prompted a flowering of apocalyptic literature, but what one finds in the Pahlavī books appears essentially to represent Sasanian beliefs. It may be presumed that towards the end of Sasanian times the following, broadly outlined views prevailed in relation to future world events.

At the close of the 10th millennium, Pishōtan, a son of king Gushtāsp, will appear and assume the leadership of the faithful. With the help of 150 righteous men and a number of yazads, he will defeat the forces of Ahriman and cleanse the world. He thus prepares the way for the birth of Hōshēdar (Av. Uxšyat.ərəta), the first of the three Saviour sons of the prophet. Hōshēdar will gather a mighty army and in a terrible battle crush the wicked and restore the religion. The 11th millennium belongs to Hōshēdar, as the 10th belongs to Zoroaster.

[1] Yasht 19.89–96.

[2] See *Bundahishn* xxxiii–xxxv; *Dēnkard* vii, 9–11; *Dādastān ī Dēnig* xxxvii; for other sources see Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 285, n. 34.

The 12th millennium belongs to Hōshēdarmāh (Av. Uxšyat.nəmah), the second Saviour. It is during this millennium that the demon Malkūsh (Av. Mahrkūsa) appears and causes the terrible snow-storm which destroys all creatures. The people and the animals who had taken refuge in Jamshēd's fortress (*Var*) are released and populate the world again. Owing to the spread of wickedness and evil heresies, however, Ahriman gains power and rouses Dahāk, who had been chained by Frēdōn in Mount Demāvand, to ravage the world. With the help of the yazads, Ohrmazd in turn rouses the hero Karshāsp from his trance. In the ensuing battle, Karshāsp slays Dahāk with his famous mace. Also called to take part in the final battle are the Zoroastrian Immortals, men and women, including Kai Khusrau, Tūs, and Gēv.

Now the time has come for the appearance of the last and greatest of the Saviours, the Sōšyant, to oversee the final victory. In the course of fifty-seven years he will resurrect the dead, beginning with Gayōmard. All men will assemble, and every person will view his own good or evil deeds. The righteous will be sent back to the highest heaven (*garōdman*) and the wicked will be cast into hell (*duzakhw*), each for the duration of three days. Then the divine Airyaman and Fire will melt all the metal in the hills and mountains and will cause all souls, both righteous and wicked, to go through an ordeal by fire and molten metal for their purification. The sins of the damned will be burnt away by the ordeal, and the wicked will be purged. The Sōšyant and his helpers will then prepare the beverage of immortality (*anōš*); each soul will drink of it and thereby become immortal. Then the Sōšyant will recompense each one according to his or her deeds. Ohrmazd will seize the Evil Spirit and the six Holy Immortals their demonic counterparts. Ahriman and the arch-demon Āz, defeated and undone by the Gathic prayer, will retreat to their dark abyss through the breach in the sky made by Ahriman when he first entered the world, and the forces of evil will be assigned to eternal gloom. A renewed existence begins a life of bliss for all the good creation.

Thus the history of the world, past and to come, is conceived and presented as a long, arduous struggle against evil. The Iranian national heroes from Gayōmard onwards are all champions of this battle. Even Zoroaster's redemptive function is conceived with his fravaši at the beginning, when Ahurā Mazdā makes his plans for creation. Even as human life had begun with Gayōmard, the Renovation will begin with his resurrection, thus completing the cycle of history. The major figures

of the epic tradition, divinities and mortals alike, will join in the final battle against evil, helping to bring to a conclusion the divine drama in which they were the chief actors.[1] The forceful and all-pervasive dualism of the Iranian religion provided a clear ideological context for the comprehension and interpretation of social and political events, as well as a framework for moral judgment. National disasters were understood to have been inflicted by Ahriman and his agents, aided by people's failure to pursue aša as admonished by Ahurā Mazdā; heretics, trespassers of social canons, rebels and wrong-doers were regarded as having erred in their moral choice and been ensnared by demons. Pollution, disease and death were accepted as evils attendant on the "mixed" state of the world. All good things were bestowed by Ahurā Mazdā, the Aməša Spəntas and the Yazatas – on those who had earned them. The future was bright with the prospect of the Sōšyant and the hope of ultimate salvation. A belief in Fate and the inexorable decrees of Time, which appears to have developed in the Sasanian period and colours some of the gnomic literature in Middle Persian, must have remained marginal to the dualistic picture of the world which gave man freedom of choice.

[1] For the developments of specific Iranian myths and legends and some other aspects of Iranian world-view, as mirrored in the national historical tradition, see chapter 10(*b*).

CHAPTER 10(*b*)

IRANIAN NATIONAL HISTORY

By national history is meant in this chapter the history of Iran as conceived by the Iranians themselves and embedded in Iranian historical tradition. Since the material for this history is partly mythical and legendary, the chapter will inevitably touch also on Iranian myths and legends.

In exploring Iranian historiography in pre-Islamic times we encounter considerable difficulty: no historical books have survived from Seleucid, Parthian or Sasanian Iran. Our exploration must therefore be based on inferential evidence On the other hand, there is no doubt that comprehensive written histories did exist, at least in Sasanian times. The latest version of a fairly official historical book, the *Khwadāy-nāmag* (Book of Lords), which treated of Iranian history from its beginnings to the end of Khusrau II's reign (A.D. 628), seems to have been compiled under Yazdgird III (631–651), the last Sasanian monarch.[1]

I
THE SOURCES

The *Khwadāy-nāmag*, together with other works pertaining to Persian history and legend, was translated early into Arabic, notably by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 757). These works, with their Arabic renderings, served

[1] Nöldeke, *Das iranisches Nationalepos*, §13.

as a basis for new recensions of the national history in Persian. All direct Arabic translations or Persian redactions of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* have been lost, but works based on them by Islamic historians and Persian poets, chiefly from the 9th to the 11th century, survive. These are our main sources for a reconstruction of the later versions of the Iranian national history prior to Islam. The Avesta, the Achaemenian inscriptions and tablets, Middle Iranian inscriptions, ostraca, papyri, graffiti and coins all reflect elements of national history. The Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Pahlavī) literature, although surviving for the most part in redactions of the 9th and 10th centuries, includes a good deal of historical, legendary and mythical material originating in more remote times.

The most important of the Islamic sources relevant to the study of the national history are the "Annals" of Ṭabarī (d. 932) and the *Shāh-nāma* ("Book of Kings") of Firdausī (d. *c.* 1029). Of the early Arabic works, Ṭabarī's "Annals" (*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) contain the fullest account of Iranian pre-Islamic history. He employed oral and written sources which reflect somewhat different traditions, and true to the method of early Islamic historians, he set them down unreconciled. Nöldeke has shown[1] that among Ṭabarī's sources was a work based on an Arabic translation of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, one utilized also by the anonymous author of the manuscript commonly called Springer 30. Bal'amī's "History", completed in 962, is an abridged translation of Ṭabarī into Persian which combines the different traditions of the Arabic original into a more homogeneous account. It is not of particular historical interest except in a few instances such as the stories of Gayōmard and of Bahrām Chōbīn, where Bal'amī has drawn on other sources to amplify Ṭabarī's account.

Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma* (completed *c.* 1010) is based primarily on a Persian prose work which was compiled by order of Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Razzāq Ṭūsī,[2] a noble who was a contemporary of the poet. Derived ultimately from Sasanian sources, the prose work incorporated not only the *Khwadāy-nāmag* (apparently for the most part through Arabic translations or compilations),[3] but also a number of historical fictions, many popular tales and legends, and a good deal of Sasanian writing intended only for edification or entertainment. Fortunately, Firdausī was not interested in abridging or curtailing his material. With his poet's taste

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, xxi–xxii.

[2] M. Qazvīnī, "Muqaddama-yi qadīm-i Shāh-nāma", *Bist Maqāla* II (Tehran 1313/1934), 20ff.

[3] Cf. Baron von Rosen, in *Vostočniye Zametki* (St Petersburg, 1885), 153–92; summarized by Christensen, *Le règne du roi Kawādh*, 23–4.

for a good story, he took full advantage of his sources and created an epic poem of great length and scope. As a historian, however, Firdausī lacks the relative precision of Ṭabarī. He often confuses the scenes of events and is particularly lax concerning names and numbers. As a poet, he was interested in literary effect rather than accuracy. And yet, owing to its sheer bulk and richness of detail, the *Shāh-nāma* remains the most important single source for the history of pre-Islamic Persia in a broad perspective.

The earliest Islamic historian to give a surviving account of Iranian history is Ya'qūbī (2nd half of the 9th century). A sober historian of concise diction, in his work he almost wholly ignores pre-Sasanian history, which he deems rather implausible.[1] He does, however, provide a systematic account of the Sasanian dynasty. His accurate report on Mānī and Manichaeism,[2] as well as his notice on the manners and customs of Zoroastrian Iran[3] attest to his careful selection of sources.

Ibn Qutaiba (d. 889), in his manual *al-Ma'ārif*, and Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq (Eutychius), the Patriarch of Alexandria (d. 940), in his "Annals" follow a tradition somewhat different from that of Ya'qūbī. These two authors, although independent of each other, agree not only in the content of their reports, but often also in turns of phrases and renderings of proper names. Nöldeke concluded that they had used the same source, and strongly suspected that this was Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*.[4] This view is reinforced by the fact that in his *'Uyūn al-akhbār* ("Choice Reports"), which contains a number of references to Sasanian customs and institutions, Ibn Qutaiba shows himself familiar with the works of Ibn al-Muqaffa' and quotes in several instances from them.[5]

Still another version of Sasanian history is provided by Dīnawarī (d. 895) in his *Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*. Unlike Ṭabarī, he has blended all his sources into a single, unified account and does not allow the different elements to be seen separately. The equation of early Iranian kings with Biblical figures – a common aberration of Muslim historiographers – is presented by him as established fact. With his taste for the dramatic, he draws also on fictional sources, notably for the stories of Alexander, Bahrām Chōbīn and Shiroe.

Mas'ūdī (d. *c*. 956), a historian of encyclopaedic knowledge, furnishes

[1] Ya'qūbī I. 179. [2] *Ibid.*, 180–1. [3] *Ibid.*, 199–203.
[4] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, xxi.
[5] Ibn Qutaiba, *'Uyūn al-akhbār* I. 2, 20, 22, 166, 276, 289; II. 9, 26, 121; III. 15, 192; IV. 7, 87.

important information on Iranian history in numerous passages of his *Murūj al-dhahab* and *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*. His often accurate knowledge of Zoroastrian lore and legend is impressive, and his references to some lost Middle Persian works are valuable.[1]

The brief but important "Annals" (*Sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*) of Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, written in 961, attest to the author's original research. His particular interest in Persian history and chronology leads him to express some valuable critical views on his sources, and to attempt, although not entirely successfully, to reconstruct Persian chronology. Hs also includes a description of the postures, the crowns, and the colours of the garb of the Sasanian kings as they appeared in the now lost "Book of the Portraits of Sasanian Kings" (*Kitāb ṣuwar mulūk banī Sāsān*).[2]

Maqdisī's "Book of the Beginnings and History" (*Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh*), composed in 996, is a thematic and almost encylopaedic work which includes some interesting observations on the beliefs and customs of pre-Islamic Persia. The author also devotes a chapter in the third volume to Persian history from Gayōmard to Yazdgird III, treating the earliest kings and the later Sasanian monarchs more fully than other Iranian kings. Like Mas'ūdī, he occasionally reveals a separate tradition.

"The Chronology of Ancient Nations" (*al-Āthār al-bāqiya*), written by Bīrūnī in 1000, contains several lists of Iranian kings and their regnal years; it is particularly informative on time-reckoning, calendars and festivals, as well as on the myths and beliefs of different faiths. The author's searching mind and his attempt to draw on native sources impart particular value to this work.

Tha'ālibī's "Prime Reports on Persian Kings" (*Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-Furs*), written *c.* 1019, gives a systematic account of Persian history and legend from the beginnings to the end of the Sasanian empire. It is based on a historical work which the author does not name but which must have been either the source used by Firdausī or one closely related to it. Although much shorter than the *Shāh-nāma*, and differing from it in some minor details, Tha'ālibī's history agrees with Firdausī's not only in its account of events but even in many rhetorical modes of expression.[3] Like the *Shāh-nāma*, it also incorporates a good many of the sayings, admonitions and discourses of the Sasanian kings.

[1] Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 106–7.
[2] Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, p. 48.
[3] See Zotenberg's edition, xxix–xxv, for a discussion of Tha'ālibī's sources, and xxv–xxxix for a detailed list of similarities and differences between Tha'ālibī and Firdausī.

Nihāyat al-irab, by an anonymous author probably of the 11th century, resembles the work of Dīnawarī in its approach; generally, however, it gives a fuller account of events, particularly of the stories of Alexander and Bahrām Chōbīn.

Among the early Persian histories, the *Zain al-akhbār* by Gardīzī (d. *c.* 1052) gives a straightforward but somewhat popular account of Iranian history without reference to sources. The interest of this chronicle lies mainly in a number of popular tales which it incorporates. *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l-qiṣaṣ*, written in 1126, is based primarily on Ḥamza's "Annals", but also draws upon Ṭabarī and Firdausī, among others. Although it hardly ranks as an original work, it is important for its quotations from sources now lost, and for recording a number of popular legends and stories.

Various local histories and geographies provide supplementary information. Among these the more pertinent are the following: Ibn al-Balkhī's *Fārs-nāma*, written in 1111 about the province of Fars, is prefaced by an account of traditional Persian history mainly based on Ḥamza and Ṭabarī, but including also information not found in other sources; *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* ("History of Sīstān"), an anonymous work of the 11th century with later additions, provides some popular tales about the ancient Sistanian heroes and the wonders of the province of Sīstan; *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, an abridged version in Persian by Muḥammad b. Zufir of an original Arabic work by Muḥammad Narshakhī written in 943, contains some interesting observations on the cult of Siyāvush in Transoxiana; and Ibn Isfandiyār's *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, written in 1216, preserves in Persian translation a valuable Middle Persian political tract, "The Letter of Tansar". The original letter, a product of the Sasanian period, is particularly instructive on social and political institutions of late Sasanian times and the way they were justified and defended.[1] Later Arabic and Persian histories add little to our information on pre-Islamic Iran.[2]

Apart from historical writings, there existed in Sasanian times a number of works dealing with institutions, protocol, rules of proper conduct, the arts and entertainment. The general classification applied to such works was *Ā'īn-nāmag*[3] ("Book of Rules [of Propriety]"). From an early date *Ā'īn-nāmag*(s) were translated into Arabic, by Ibn al-Muqaffa', among others, and were adopted into Arabic and Persian

[1] Cf. Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, 11ff; Grignachi, 9.

[2] For a list of these, see Christensen, *L'Iran*, 70ff, and pp. 1280ff in this volume.

[3] See Ibn al-Nadīm, 364; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 104–6.

adab literature.[1] Since much of the content of *Ā'īn-nāmags* was related to the social and political organization and the religious and ethical ideals of Sasanian society, the inclusion of this material in Islamic writings is an important aid to clarification of some aspects of Iranian national history. Outstanding in this genre are "The Book of the Crown" (*Kitāb al-tāj*), attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ; "Keys to the Sciences" (*Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*) by Khwārazmī; and a number of "mirrors for princes" in Persian, notably the *Qābūs-nāma* by Kai Kāvūs b. Iskandar and *Siyar al-Mulūk* (*Siyāsat-nāma*) by Niẓām al-Mulk, both of the 11th century.

Of the Middle Persian Zoroastrian works (books in Pahlavi) the following are pertinent and of particular interest: the *Dēnkard*, a Zoroastrian encyclopaedic work composed in the 9th century, gives a summary of the lost books (nasks) of the Avesta as compiled in Sasanian times. It supplies important information derived from priestly literature concerning national history and legends. (See pp. 1171ff.) Books III and VII-IX are of especial interest in this respect. The *Bundahishn*, also called *Zand-āgāhīh*, another 9th-century composition, is an important Zoroastrian work on the creation, nature and whereabouts of earthly creatures and on the Kayanian kings. A treasure-house of Zoroastrian lore, it preserves many ancient myths and legends; several chapters toward the end of the book (i.e. chapters xxxii on the mansions erected by the Kayanian kings, xxxiii on the calamities which befell the lands of Ērānshahr, and xxxv on the lineage of the Kayanian kings) have a direct bearing on the national history.[2] The *Vizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam* covers in part the same ground as the *Bundahishn* and, like it, is based on the Avesta and its Pahlavi translation and commentary, the *Zand*. The account in the *Vizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam* of the creation, the legends of Zoroaster and some future saviours and heroes, and the restoration of the world at the end of time helps to elucidate certain religious aspects of the national history. The *Zand ī Vahman Yasht* is a piece of prophetic literature based on the lost *Vahman Yasht* and *Sūdgar Nask* of the Avesta. It gives a continuous account of the Ages of the World, leading to the coming of the Saviour and the final triumph of good.[3]

Of a different nature is *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*, an epic piece of literature in verse, which portrays the holy wars resulting from King Gushtāsp's conversion to the religion of Zoroaster. The work is important because

[1] See Inostrantsev, 25–80; Christensen, *L'Iran*, 61–2; A. Tafazzolī in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Dānishnāma* I, 226.

[2] For a discussion of the sources of the *Bundahishn* see Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 44–69.

[3] See pp. 356ff above.

it provides a Middle Persian version of an episode recounted also by Firdausī and Tha'ālibī, and because it throws light on the form and rhetorical conventions of Sasanian epics. *Kārnāmag ī Ardashīr ī Pāpagān*, a short book, is apparently an abridged version of a fuller popular account of the miraculous life of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, of the birth and discovery of his son and successor Shāpūr I, and the latter's son Hurmazd. Probably composed towards the end of Sasanian times, it is a clear instance of the divergence of the popular from the more serious accounts of national heroes.[1]

As we have seen, for the latest redaction of the national historical tradition our main sources are the Islamic works based on the *Khwadāy-nāmag*s and other late Sasanian writings. For the earliest version of Iranian mythical and legendary history, however, we must turn primarily to the Avesta, the holy scriptures of the Zoroastrians. The most significant section of the Avesta in this respect is the Yashts, a collection of hymns addressed to various Iranian deities. Although the composition of the Yashts in their extant form is later than Zoroaster, their content predates him, for they contain myths which the eastern Iranians had inherited from pagan times, as well as legends which reflect pre-Zoroastrian heroic ages. The striking fact is that the general frame of the national historical tradition and the sequence of personages in it are already adumbrated in the Yashts. (See below, pp. 413 ff. for details.) Of the other sections of the Avesta, the first chapter of the *Vendīdād* (*Vidēvdād*), which enumerates the Iranian lands created by Ahurā Mazdā and contaminated by Ahriman, and the second, which relates the myth of Yima and his subterranean fortress, are of particular interest for our purposes.

For probing into remoter times, when the Indo-Iranians had not yet come to a parting of ways, the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, the most ancient literature of the Aryan Indians, generally held to have been composed in the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C., are of great importance. Many deities, mythical figures and possibly also some legendary ones are shared by the Avestan and Vedic people. A Vedic counterpart attests to the antiquity of an Avestan figure.

Some cuneiform documents of the 2nd millennium B.C. found in Egypt, Anatolia and Syria, also throw light on the early waves of migrant Indo-Iranians in the Near East and some of their deities and concepts (see below, p. 411).

[1] For fuller accounts of Middle Persian sources see bibliography to Chapter 32(a).

Finally the study of the development of the national tradition greatly benefits from foreign sources, among which Greek, Armenian and Syriac are of particular importance.[1]

FEATURES OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY

The Iranian national history, as it is assumed to have been recorded in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*s, beginning with the beginnings, traced the history of the Iranian people from the first king, Gayōmard, almost to the end of the Sasanian period. It distinguished four periods marked by four dynasties: (1) the Pīshdādīs (Pishdadians), the early kings who ruled over the world and contributed to the progress of civilization by their teachings and institutions; (2) the Kayānīs (Kayanians), who were the kings of Iran proper and who were in continual conflict with their neighbours, the Turanians; (3) the Ashkānīs (Ashkanians, i.e. Arsacids), who headed a feudal system and allegedly presided over the dark ages of Iranian history; and (4) the Sāsānīs (Sasanians), who were presented as having restored unity and integrity to Iran and as having established vigorous political, social and religious institutions.

Some of the features of the national history as it evolved in late Sasanian times may be observed here. The first is that no distinction was made between the factual, the legendary, and the mythical. All three are blended in a unified whole, presented as a continuous narrative of events. Thus, the account of the Pishdadians, mythical figures chiefly, was given in the same vein as that of the Sasanians. The second is that the history of the Medes and the Achaemenians had no place in the record. In fact, its authors displayed no appreciable knowledge of events in western and southern Iran before Alexander; it was an eastern tradition which formed the basis of the early portion of this history. The third is its strong religious bias. Although its early part dated from pre-Zoroastrian times, and much of it had its roots in Indo-Iranian consciousness, eventually it assumed a pronounced Zoroastrian colouring. For this quality the firm alliance between church and state in Sasanian times was largely responsible. The fourth is that it possessed no era to serve the chronology; it was the succession of kings which provided the chronological frame for events. There were some sixty kings and queens who constituted the hub of the narrative. The

[1] For a discussion of these and other foreign sources see Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 74ff and pp. ch. 37 in this volume.

exploits of vassal kings and heroes were subsumed under the reigns of their sovereigns, an arrangement which reflected the great power and prominence of the king of kings in Sasanian Iran. But since the national history combined and absorbed different strains of oral tradition and local legend which did not always fit into its general frame, oddities occurred, such as the continuance of the life of the warrior Zāl through the reigns of some nine kings.

From a different viewpoint, the course of the national history may be divided into three parts. (1) The era of the world-kings, from Gayōmard to Frēdōn. As chiefly mythical figures of considerable antiquity, these kings rule over man and beast alike. Their chief adversaries are the demons (*dēvs*), embodiments of evil and hindrances to material well-being. (2) The heroic period, which begins with the uprising of Frēdōn (Farēdōn) against the tyrant Dahāk and continues through the Kayanian dynasty. The overriding motif of history in this period is the long and bitter feud between the Iranians and the Turanians. The underlying theme is the defence of the Iranian kingdom (Ērānshahr) in the face of Ahrimanic designs. All the calamities which befall Ērānshahr, the chief of which are the invasions of Dahāk, Afrāsiyāb and Arjāsp, are seen as engineered by the Evil Spirit and as part of his cosmic plan to harm the world of Ahura Mazdā.[1] This period is marked by the exploits of great warriors, chiefly from the houses of Kārēn, Sām, Naudhar and the Turanian house of Pashang. (3) The historical era, from Alexander onward. Like the first period, this lacks the unifying motif of the heroic period, but the institution of kingship and its vicissitudes afford it a measure of cohesion, and a number of legends lend it attraction.

THE IRANIAN HISTORICAL OUTLOOK

In order to understand the form and character of the national history, we must first examine its premises. Applying the principles of Western historical criticism, which are the product of a different environment and different intellectual concerns, will be of little help in achieving an appreciation of the true purport of Iranian historiography. The Zoroastrian religion provides the basic moral and intellectual foundations for a concept of history. This concept assigns to man a place in the universe and renders his past, present and future part of an all-embracing cosmic plan; it makes his actions significant and therefore worth

[1] Cf. pp. 353ff.

recording, and remembering; and it is not basically different from that of Judaism, Christianity and Islam insofar as it gives man an honourable place in the community of creatures, and through his relations with God, helps him overcome his isolation and insignificance.[1] But it goes beyond this by making him a relatively free and active agent in the scheme of the universe. Man is created by Ahura Mazdā for a purpose, and is united with the rest of the good world in a common battle against the forces of evil.

The life of the world is limited; man operates within a defined span of time. This begins in the past with the onslaught of Ahriman on the creation of Ahura Mazdā, and continues for 6,000 years, until the *tan ī pasīn* (lit. the Final Body), when the annihilation of evil and the restoration of good is signalled by the coming of the Saviour.[2] Men are susceptible to the corrupting temptations of Ahriman and his host of demons, but they are guided in the course of their lives by Ahura Mazdā, the Holy Immortals (Aməša Spəntas) and other divine beings, all subordinate to Ahura Mazdā. The community of men is led by kings, whose legitimacy depends on divine grace. This grace is symbolized by *xvarənah* (M.P. *farrah*, Pers. *farr*), the kingly Fortune, which accompanies good rulers and assures their success.[3] Kings are the guardians of society and the authors of its laws and institutions. History consists of the account of their deeds. A record of their actions, words and institutions would provide a history of political and social events, as well as a history of ethical and intellectual postures. As conceived in priestly circles, history does not concern itself with the past alone; it also encompasses the future. The history of men is not separated from the history of the universe; rather, it is a part of it and must be viewed in the context of the whole scheme of creation and of the development of cosmic events leading to the utter defeat of Ahriman. In this context, men are not the only agents of history; divine beings, the immortal souls of the dead (the *fravašis*), and the luminaries (sun, moon, stars) also affect the manner in which history unfolds.

The fact that the broad outlines of cosmic history were thought to have been determined at the very beginning of the world[4] may have contributed to a relative absence of critical curiosity in Iranian historiography. History was not conceived as a "discipline" to satisfy a thirst for fact, nor were its methods attuned to such a purpose. History had

[1] Cf. F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), 22ff.
[2] See pp. 356ff. [3] See p. 345. [4] See also p. 357.

primarily an edifying aim; in the hierarchiacal, conventional and conservative world of the Sasanian establishment, the purpose of history was to maintain and promote the national and moral ideals of the state. Its authors were members of the scribal class, who, closely allied to the clergy and the nobles, served their interests and reflected their ideas. History was to teach the rulers and ruling classes the virtues of abiding by the dictates of "the good religion", of rendering justice to the people and of making the land prosper. To the people it taught the virtues of unswerving loyalty to the kings and of observing "law and order". Innovations were to be mistrusted, unless they were beneficial ones instituted by a good king. History was, then, an educational instrument of social stability and cohesion. It was intended to strengthen a common heritage and to promote a common ideal. It was to teach its readers love of their homeland and pride in their ancestry. It held the exalted life of the heroes of the Iranian past before their eyes as models to be emulated. It incorporated in its pages the wisdom of the sages, and argued against the ideas and practices which were thought to be harmful (such as the teachings of Mānī and Mazdak, viewed as heresies by the Zoroastrians). Thus the historiographer, far from being an impartial investigator of facts, was an upholder and promoter of the social, political and moral values cherished by the Sasanian élite.

To achieve its social rôle, history had to be readable and persuasive. In its earlier stages, when it was transmitted by oral tradition, it assumed rhetorical features which were preserved even when history was committed to writing. The irrelevance of distinction between fact, myth and legend has already been noted (p. 366); each could equally well serve the same cultural purpose. Very often literary devices, such as metaphor and hyperbole, were employed to reinforce the impact of narration. Much of Iranian history, based on heroic poetry, preserved its epic quality. It was depicted with broad brush strokes and bold colours, and details not significant to the main purpose of the story or detrimental to its emotive force were ignored. Popular tales had little difficulty in entering the domain of history and obtaining the right of citizenship. The authors of the historical works which served as the sources of Tha'ālibī and Firdausī had, in all probability, followed the Sasanian tradition in bringing together a narration of the Persian past in which the theme was historical but the method largely literary. In the hands of Firdausī, who understood the character and direction of Persian historical writing, Iranian history developed into a literary masterpiece. In

the hands of Ṭabarī, with his "reporter's" attitude and training, and his use of a method suited for the transmission of the words and deeds of the prophet (*ḥadīth*), Iranian history is often disjointed and frequently loses its purport and character.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY

It will be useful at this point to give a brief summary of the national history as conceived in late Sasanian times and reconstructed, with due reservations, from post-Sasanian sources. In view of the frequent ambiguity and variation of the Middle Persian forms of proper names, their Persian form as registered in the *Shāh-nāma* – with the *majhūl* vowels *ē* and *ō* duly registered – will be generally adopted, except when the *Shāh-nāma* form is an Arabic one, or when a different form has appeared advisable on other grounds: thus Gayōmard, Dahāk and Kavād rather than Kayōmarth, Ḍaḥḥāk and Qubādh.[1] It should be noted that there is considerable variation to be found in the regnal years and the genealogies of the kings of the first two dynasties. Not all such variations, however, can be attributed to the Islamic period. Many of them obviously originated in Sasanian Persia as a result of varying oral traditions, and some are due to interpretive differences, such as taking a king's life-span for the years of his rule.

The national history begins with the reign of Gayōmard, the first world-king, who reigns over men and beasts for 30 years, according to most accounts. He resides first in the mountains and wears a leopard skin. Firdausī relates only this version, but some other sources have also preserved an account of Gayōmard according to the religious tradition. This account, of which we find the fullest version in the *Bundahishn*,[2] describes Gayōmard not as the first king, but as the prototype of man, brought forth by Ahura Mazdā at the sixth stage of creation. He suffers injuries in the course of Ahriman's onslaught and dies 30 years later. From his seed, after its purification by the sun, grows a rhubarb plant, out of which develop Mashya and Mashyāna, the first mortal man and woman, corresponding to Adam and Eve.[3]

Siyāmak, Gayōmard's son according to Firdausī and Tha'ālibī,[4] or a son of Mashya and Mashyāna according to the *Bundahishn* and most

[1] Also Frēdōn, in view of the uncertainty of the epenthetic vowel in Firdausī.

[2] ia. 13, 21; iv. 26; vif; xiv. 1–5.

[3] Ḥamza, 24, 64ff; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 100; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 99–100; cf. Ṭabarī I. 147, 154; Ibn al-Balkhī, 9, 27.

[4] P. 5.

other sources,[1] is slain by demons and is duly avenged by Hōshang.[2] Hōshang, reckoned as Siyāmak's son by Firdausī and as his grandson by most other sources,[3] bears the title of Pīshdād. With him begins the Pishdadian dynasty. Possessing the farrah, he is a powerful king, who subdues Ahriman and his demons and reigns over the world for forty years. He succeeds in extracting metal from rock, devises a means of drawing water from rivers in order to cultivate the land and is the first to tame animals and build houses. He also incidentally discovers fire by hitting a stone against a rock while attempting to kill a serpent, and he institutes the festival of Sada in commemoration of this discovery.[4]

Hōshang is followed by Tahmōrath, a son of Hōshang according to Firdausī, a son of Vīvanghan and a descendant of Hōshang according to other sources.[5] Tahmōrath subjugates all the demons and rides far and wide on the back of Ahriman, whom he has transformed into a horse. He reigns for 30 years (or 40 according to some accounts). Like Hōshang, he improves the material culture of the world. He is the first to spin wool for clothing, to use dogs to protect flocks, to employ falcon and hound for hunting, to tame fowls and to exploit beasts of burden. He captures hosts of demons, who, to seek his favour, release to him the secret of writing. It is during his reign that the Buddha *Būdāsaf*) appears.

Tahmōrath is succeeded by his brother Jamshēd, one of the most colourful figures of Iranian myth. He rules with great glory over men and demons for over 600 years and further promotes the material well-being of the human race by teaching people how to fashion metal weapons, to spin and weave silk, cotton and flax, to mine gold and silver, to produce perfumes and spices, and to erect houses and bath-houses with stones hewn from quarries. He divides the people into four classes according to their profession: clergy, warriors, scribes and artisans, traders and farmers. In his realm of seven climes happiness reigns and, by the grace of the farrah, evil, old age, sickness, envy and extremes of weather are banished. At the height of his power he orders the demons to build a carriage in which he rises into the skies. He commemorates the event by instituting Nau Rūz, the New Year festival,

[1] *Bundahishn* xiv, 32–7; Ṭabarī I. 154; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 110; Ḥamza, 24; Bīrūnī, 103; Ibn al-Balkhī, 9.

[2] Cf. Tha'ālibī, 5; Ibn al-Balkhī, 9.

[3] See note 1 above.

[4] This aetiological myth occurs, however, only in Firdausī, 18–19, among the early sources.

[5] Ṭabari I. 174–5; Ḥamza, 13, 24; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 111; Bīrūnī, 103; Tha'ālibī, 7.

at the vernal equinox. His power and success, however, fill him with pride. Seduced by Ahriman, he proclaims himself divine, whereupon the farrah departs from him, leaving him vulnerable to the attack of a monstrous tyrant, Dahāk, who seizes the fugitive Jamshēd and has him sawn in half.

A sorcerer and an agent of Ahriman, Dahāk was descended from Siyāmak on his father's side, but his mother had demonic lineage.[1] He captured the throne of Jamshēd, married his two sisters (and wives),[2] and continued his oppressive rule for a thousand years. He had many people slain in order to feed their brains to two serpents which had grown on his shoulders. Eventually, his tyranny enraged Kāva,[3] a smith who had lost all but one of his sons to Dahāk's serpents. Kāva leads a popular rebellion which precipitates the despot's fall. The smith's leather apron, which he uses as a banner, is later adorned, bejewelled and chosen as the Iranian national flag and a symbol of Iranian suzerainty.

Frēdōn, a descendant of Jamshēd raised in secret for fear of Dahāk and graced with the farrah, is now sought out and proclaimed king. He invades Dahāk's palace, frees the two beauties of whom Dahāk had deprived Jamshēd, defeats the tyrant with his bull-headed mace and, following the advice of Surōsh, the messenger of God,[4] chains him on Mount Demāvand. Thus, the kingship is restored to its rightful claimant and peace and prosperity reigns once more over the world.

In order to forestall possible future clashes, Frēdōn divides his world-empire during his own life-time among his three sons. He gives the western lands to Salm, his eldest son, the north and the east, namely Tūrān and China, to Tūr, but the central clime (Khwanīrah), which includes Ērānshahr, he gives to his youngest and favourite son, Ēraj. This apportionment rouses the jealousy and rancour of the elder brothers, who conspire to murder Ēraj. The slaying of the noble Ēraj at the hand of Tūr grieves Frēdōn deeply and lays the foundation for a bitter, bloody and protracted feud between the royal houses of Iran and Turan. With Frēdōn's division of his kingdom, the era of world-kings comes to an end.

Though Ēraj had no son to avenge his blood, Manūchihr, a descen-

[1] *Bundahishn* xxxv. 7; cf. Ṭabarī I. 209; but according to a tradition quoted by Ibn al-Balkhī, 11, his mother was a sister of Jamshēd.

[2] Ṭabarī, I, 205; Firdausī, 35 ("daughters" in Moscow ed., p. 51, and Mohl ed. p. 68).

[3] Kābī in most Arabic sources, including Ṭabarī I. 207. Tha'ālibī records both Kābī (26) and Kāva (38).

[4] Firdausī, 59, 484–6.

dant of Ēraj's daughter, whom Frēdōn had reared, eventually ascends the throne. Helped by his general Kārēn, a son of Kāva the smith, Manūchihr tracks down and kills both Tūr and Salm in battle, thus avenging Ēraj's blood and freeing the Iranians from shame.

The feud intensifies, however, with the advent of Afrāsiyāb, who invades Ērānshahr during the reign of Manūchihr,[1] defeats the Iranian army and forces it to retreat. Peace is achieved when the two sides agree to have an arrow shot from the Caspian province of Ṭabaristān and to consider the point of its landing as the border between Iran and Turan. Ārish, the best bowman of Iran, shoots the arrow; helped by divine guidance, it flies for a whole day and at sunset lands by the River Oxus. This boundary Afrāsiyāb reluctantly accepts as the common frontier.[2] In the reign of Naudhar, the son and successor of Manūchihr, Afrāsiyāb undertakes a fierce campaign against Iran. Merciless battles ensue and a number of leading warriors from both sides are killed. Kārēn, the general of the Iranian army, and Zāl, the vassal king of Sīstān, Vēsa, a brother of Afrāsiyāb and the general of the Turanian arny, and Bārmān, a Turanian hero, all distinguish themselves. In the end, however, Afrāsiyāb triumphs. He defeats, captures and slays Naudhar, lays the country waste, and occupies the Iranian throne. In a fit of rage he also kills his own brother Aghrērath, a noble warrior who shows sympathy for the Iranian cause. The country does not recover until much later, when Zāb, a prince of royal blood, is proclaimed king. Zāb is assisted in his successful campaign against Afrāsiyāb by the formidable warrior Karshāsp, who is variously named a predecessor, helper, co-ruler, or successor of Zāb.

Under Manūchihr the exploits of the heroic vassal kings of Sīstān, headed by Sām and followed in turn by his son Zāl and his grandson, the redoubtable Rustam, begin to unfold. To Sām, the chief warrior (*jihān-pahlavān*)[3] at Manūchihr's court, a white-haired son, Zāl, is born. Disappointed and shamed by his appearance, Sām abandons him in the wilderness. Sīmurgh, the miraculous bird, takes Zāl to its nest on a mountain peak and rears him with its own young. When Zāl is grown, the bird returns him to his father, who, torn by remorse and prompted by a prophetic dream, is now searching for him.

[1] This according to Ṭabarī I. 434, 436; Ḥamza, 341; *Bundahishn* xxxiii. 5; and Bīrūnī, 220; but during the reign of his successor Naudhar, according to another tradition in Ṭabarī I. 529; Tha'ālibī, 107; and Firdausī, 251.

[2] Yasht 8. 6; Ṭabarī I. 435, 992, 997; Bīrūnī, 220; Tha'ālibī, 107, 133. Cf. Darmesteter, *Études Iraniennes* II. 220; Nöldeke, "Der beste der arischen Pfeilschützen", *ZDMG* xxxv (1881), 445.

[3] *Shāh-nāma*, 131. 30.

The son grows into a matchless warrior and a staunch supporter of the throne. A fascinating and adventurous romance leads to his marriage with Rōdāba, the daughter of Mihrāb, king of Kābul and a descendant of Dahāk. The fruit of this marriage is Rustam, whose feats of valour eventually make him the predominant figure of the Persian national epic. Repeatedly he strikes terror into the heart of the Turanian armies and on more than one occasion he defeats Afrāsiyāb and his foremost warriors. Twice he restores King Kāvūs to his throne and saves the country from imminent disaster. His matchless steed, Rakhsh, is as distinguished among its kind as Rustam is among men. Rustam's fabulous life-span stretches almost to the end of the Kayanian dynasty. The best-known episodes of his career are his exploits at the "Seven Stations" (*Haft Khwān*) during his journey to Māzandarān in order to rescue King Kāvūs, an undertaking which culminates in his slaying the fearsome White Dēv; his defeat and dispatch of the heroic young Prince Isfandiyār, with help from the bird Sīmurgh; and his inadvertent slaying in single combat of his own extraordinary son, Suhrāb, whom he fails to recognize. The last two episodes are the substance of two of the most moving tragedies recounted by Firdausī.

After an interregnum following the reign of Zāb, the nobles offer their allegiance to Kai Kavād, a prince of royal blood, who wages war against Afrāsiyāb and does much to rebuild Ērānshahr. With Kai Kavād, a new dynasty, the Kayanian, is established, all of whose members are graced with the farrah, and whose names are preceded by the title Kai "king" (hence Kayān, "kings").

Kai Kavād's two immediate successors, Kai Kāvūs and Kai Khusrau are of particular renown. The reign of Kāvūs, an ambitious, petulant and unpredictable ruler with a mean streak in his nature, is marked by many wars and adventures. He makes an ill-advised foray into the territory of Māzandarān, where, according to Firdausi, he is defeated and made captive.[1] He is eventually set free only by the arduous efforts of Rustam. On another occasion he makes an ill-fated attack on Hāmāvarān (i.e. Ḥimyar in Yemen), only to be defeated and rescued again by Rustam. The demons grow active under him and plot the murder of his wise and pious vizier, Ōshnar. While Kāvūs is a prisoner in Hāmāvarān, Afrāsiyāb usurps his throne.[2] But Kāvūs's arrogance is not diminished by defeat or disaster. He makes the demons

[1] The episode is not found, however, in early Islamic sources, including Tha'ālibī.
[2] *Dēnkard*, IX. 4–12.

build him a fortified city with marvellous edifices.[1] Drunk with power and aided by the demons, he seeks to rise into the sky (according to Firdausī[2] and Tha'ālibī,[3] in a carriage flown by four eagles), but is overthrown and brought back to earth and to his senses.

Of chief importance in Kāvūs's reign, however, are the events which lead to a feud between Iran and Turan even more ferocious than before. Sūdāba, a daughter of an alien king[4] and a wife of Kāvūs, is infatuated with Siyāvush, the favourite son of the king. Rebuffed by the virtuous prince, she accuses him before his father of having made amorous advances toward her. The prince is called upon to prove his innocence by an ordeal by fire. He passes through this unharmed. Then he volunteers to lead an expedition against Turan in order to avoid the wiles of his detractor. Afrāsiyāb, however, cautioned by a bad dream, agrees to Siyāvush's conditions for peace and war becomes unnecessary. But Kāvūs is outraged at the news and orders Siyāvush to forgo peace, to send the hostages to the Iranian court, and to fight Afrāsiyāb to the end. Holding a breach of his agreement to be impossible, Siyāvush sends his army back to Iran, while he himself, persuaded by Pīrān, a noble general and cousin of Afrāsiyāb, takes refuge with the Turanian king, who treats him regally and gives him his daughter, Vasfāfrīd,[5] in marriage. He enjoys the king's favour for a while, and builds the marvellous castle Kang Dēz, a veritable paradise on earth. Some Turanian princes envy the brilliance of Siyāvush and plot against him; a suspicious Afrāsiyāb eventually orders him to be slain. News of the death causes unprecedented rage at the Iranian court, and Kāvūs suffers harsh criticism from the nobles for his rash treatment of his crown prince. According to Firdausī, Rustam slays Sūdāba in retaliation and vows vengeance for the prince's blood. An Iranian punitive expedition drives Afrāsiyāb from his country for a time.

The pleadings of Pīrān save the pregnant wife of Siyāvush, and Pīrān brings up her son, Kai Khusrau. The news of Kai Khusrau's birth revives hope for vengeance among the Iranians, and Kāvūs dispatches Gēv, the able son of Gōdarz and one of the king's outstanding generals, to find the prince and bring him to Iran. After a hazardous journey, Kai Khusrau is successfully led to the Iranian court; he proves his worth,

[1] *Bundahishn* xxxii. 11; Ṭabarī, 602. [2] P. 411. [3] Pp. 165–67.

[4] The king of Yemen according to Firdausī, 384ff., and Afrāsiyāb according to a tradition in Ṭabarī I. 598; cf. Ibn al-Balkhī, 41.

[5] *vsf'fryδ* in Ṭabarī I. 600; *ksyfry* in Tha'ālibī, 205ff; and Farangīs (for *Gasīfarī or *Gasīfaran, putting the second component first, apparently for the sake of the metre) in Firdausī, 607ff.

and frustratets the claims to kingship of two princely generals, Tūs and Gustahm; his accession as king is announced in Kāvūs's lifetime. Helped by a host of distinguished warriors, among whom are Rustam, Gōdarz and the latter's many sons, headed by the valiant Gēv, Kai Khusrau invades Turan. After some initial reverses, in which the house of Gōdarz suffers heavy losses, and then a long series of wars, the Iranian army defeats Afrāsiyāb utterly and forces him to flee. Gēv, however, succeeds in finding and capturing him, and Kai Khusrau puts him to death, thus closing a fateful chapter of Irano-Turanian feuds.

Kai Khusrau, famed for his wisdom and valour, comes to a strange end. After Afrāsiyāb's death he turns away from the affairs of the world and gives himself up to meditation and prayer. He indicates Luhrāsp, a distant relative, as his successor before he disappears mysteriously. Luhrāsp fulfills Kai Khusrau's expectations in protecting the Iranian boundaries and ruling wisely until, advanced in age, he retires from the throne, leaving it to his ambitious son, Gushtāsp. It is during the reign of Gushtāsp that Zoroaster proclaims his religion. Gushtāsp embraces the new faith and joins the prophet in proselytizing. Outraged at what he considers a betrayal of the old faith, Arjāsp, the king of Turan,[1] invades Iran and inflicts heavy losses on the house of Gushtāsp. The king's devoted and valorous brother Zarēr perishes at the hand of Bīdarafsh, Arjāsp's brother, during a terrible battle. Zarēr's blood is avenged by his young son, Bastūr.[2] With the help of Isfandiyār, Gushtāsp's eldest son and crown prince, Bastūr defeats the Turanian army, killing Bīdarafsh and many others of royal blood.

Later, Gushtāsp becomes suspicious of Isfandiyār's ambitions and has him imprisoned, but a new and devastating onslaught by Arjāsp, in the course of which Luhrāsp is put to death, forces the king to free Isfandiyār and seek his help against the Turanians. He promises Isfandiyār the throne, should he be victorious. Isfandiyār duly defeats the Turanian army, frees his two captive sisters, retrieves the national standard, and slays Arjāsp along with many of his kin. It is in the course of this merciless retaliation that Isfandiyār performs his famous feats of strength and courage called, like those of Rustam, "The Seven Stations". Gushtāsp, however, demurs at bestowing the kingdom on his victorious son, making the further condition that Isfandiyār

[1] Ṭabarī I. 617, 676, records Kharzāsaf, which represents a different reading of the Mid. Pers. form. See *ibid.*, 617, n. *e*, for other variants.

[2] The *Shāh-nāma* and some later sources call the prince Nastūr, through a misreading of *n* for *b*; cf. Av. Bastawairi; Mid.Pers. Bastvar.

journey to Sīstān and bring Rustam back in fetters to the court. (Gushtāsp claims that Rustam has failed to pay his respects to the crown for some time.) This task places the young warrior in a difficult position. He is suspicious of his father's motives and has little liking for the command that pits him against the invincible warrior, but his pride and ambition persuade him to take up the challenge. Rustam refuses gently but firmly Isfandiyār's demand that he return to court as a prisoner and repeatedly attempts to induce the prince to follow a friendlier course; to no avail, however, for the proud prince insists on either submission or battle. A series of single combats follow, in which Isfandiyār proves a formidable and at times superior match for the old warrior. At last Rustam, aided by the bird Sīmurgh, succeeds in inflicting a mortal arrow-wound on the young hero.

Shortly afterward, Rustam is killed through the stratagems of an envious and embittered brother, leaving his provinces a prey for Bahman, the son of Isfandiyār, who has succeeded Gushtāsp and seeks revenge for the slaying of his father. Bahman overruns and plunders Rustam's province, Zābul, and kills Rustam's brother and son. According to another tradition[1] he also kills Zāl and Rustam.

Bahman is succeeded by his daughter Humāy, whom he had taken as his wife, and who bears him a son, Dārā(b). Bahman's other son Sāsān, disenchanted with his father's preference for his sister, leaves the court and embarks on a life of wandering. Eventually Dārā ascends the throne and is succeeded in turn by his son Dārā the Younger, who is defeated by Alexander the Great and killed in battle.

According to genuine Iranian tradition, Alexander destroyed the integrity of the Iranian empire by undermining the authority of its kings and dividing the land among feudatory lords. Further, he ruined fire temples, killed Zoroastrian priests and destroyed their manuscripts, transferring Persian science and philosophy to Rūm (Greece). On the other hand, the legendary life of Alexander, written by the pseudo-Callisthenes sometime before the 4th century, was translated into Middle Persian during the 6th century, and its content, with some modifications, was later adopted into the body of Iranian historical tradition. In the Iranian form of the romance, Alexander becomes a son of Dārā I and a half brother of his adversary, Dārā II.

According to this version, betrayed and mortally wounded by two of his own officers, Dārā asks Alexander to avenge his blood and marry

[1] Ṭabarī I. 687.

his daughter, Raushanak. Alexander obliges, and then sets out to conquer other lands. He undertakes many adventures, including the search for the fountain of eternal life in the kingdom of darkness. Concerned about the future of his realm and the possible uprising of the Iranians, he divides Ērānshahr among kinglets (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*, "tribal kings"), thus sowing the seed of disunity and barring the rise to power of any single dominant ruler.

Iranian historiography knows little about the Seleucids. Ṭabarī has a mere fleeting reference to Seleucus and Antiochus, cited from Hishām Kalbī.[1] The Arsacids, with their loosely knit and decentralized form of government, were considered heirs to Alexander. For some 266 years this allegedly alien feudatory system prevailed and provincial kings ruled over the country. Among these kings, however, a branch called the Ashkānīs (Arsacids), which ruled over western and central Iran and succeeded in controlling Babylonia, was held in great respect by the other kings, according to Islamic sources. Their primacy among local princes was recognized without their being in a position to appoint or dismiss regional rulers. A list of some eleven Arsacid kings is given by most Islamic historians with brief and generally empty accounts of their reigns (see below). Ardavān is given as the last as well as the most important Arsacid king. It is against this Ardavān that Ardashīr Pāpagān, a vassal king in Fārs and the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, rose in rebellion.

Ardashīr was from the house of Sāsān, son of Bahman and therefore a descendant of the Kayanians. He made it his goal to unite the country and restore its Kayanian unity and greatness. His ancestor, Sāsān, had chosen a pastoral life. According to Ṭabarī,[2] Sāsān the Younger, Ardashīr's grandfather and an able warrior, was in charge of a fire temple in Stakhr, dedicated to the goddess Anāhīt. This Sāsān married the beautiful daughter of the Bāzrangī king of Fārs and she gave birth to Pāpag. As a young man, Pāpag had a vision of his destiny, and worked his way up to secure the Bāzrangī crown for himself. His son Ardashīr took up arms against Ardavān in pursuit of a still more ambitious goal. Ardashīr finally defeated and killed Ardavān, placing his foot on the great king's head as a symbol of his utter victory. Then he assumed the title of "King of kings ' (*Shāhānshāh*), and embarked on a systematic overthrow of the Arsacid princes.[3] A series of further conquests secured many other provinces and led to the formation of a large empire extend-

[1] I. 704. [2] I. 814. [3] *Ibid.*, 823.

ing from the limits of Greater Khurāsān to Syria. He received the allegiance of the kings of Kushān and other outlying territories. Towards the end of his life he crowned his son Shāpūr, and retired from the throne to a life of meditation and prayer.

A paragon of valour and wisdom, Ardashīr organized the country and its administration on a sound basis, regularized the affairs of the four estates, and revived in Iran the study of philosophy and the sciences which Alexander had suppressed. He also built a great many cities (mostly in Khūzistān and Mesopotamia) and founded and endowed many fire temples. He was aided by an able vizier, Abarsām, and a sagacious counsellor, Tansar (or Tōsar). Ardashīr issued many epistles containing his social and political views, and left a famous testament on good government and personal conduct for his son Shāpūr.[1]

The accounts of other Sasanian kings follow in broad outlines the course of events as it is known from other sources, but there are considerable differences of emphasis, and therefore the total picture has a different colouring and orientation. In his account of the Sasanian kings, the Iranian historiographer directs his attention to several themes: the king's lineage; his upbringing; his major military undertakings; his endeavours for the prosperity of the realm (cultivation of the land, building of cities, canals, dams, bridges and fire temples); his piety, justice and personal conduct; his administrative measures; his pleasures; his counsels and words of wisdom; and his regnal years. Of course, not all these points are covered for each king. In fact, in the case of minor kings information is meagre and there is a rather disproportionate concentration on the major kings, or those who had captured through their deeds the imagination of the people. Typically, Firdausī provides very little factual data on the six kings between Shāpūr I and Shāpūr II, and it is mostly their discourses and admonitions which he cites. The Sasanian kings who are treated at greater length are Ardashīr, Shāpūr I and Shāpūr II, Yazdgird I, Bahrām V, Pērōz, Kavād, Khusrau I, Hurmazd IV, Khusrau II, Shīrōy, and Yazdgird III. In the account of their lives we find fact and fancy mingled, a good many legends and stories being attached to their biographies. Some of these may be noted here briefly.

Upon Ardavān's demand, the young Ardashīr is sent to his court to be educated and brought up with Ardavān's children. But through

[1] See Iḥsān 'Abbās (ed.), *'Ahd-i Ardashīr*, Firdausi, 1980–2000 and Grignaschi, for a representative selection of the advice and admonitions attributed to him.

audacity, Ardashīr incurs the king's displeasure and is put in jail. Ardavān's favourite maiden falls in love with Ardashīr and reports to him the gloomy predictions of Ardavān's astrologers. Ardashīr and the maiden plot their escape and set out at night. Ardavān rides in pursuit of them, but loses hope when he hears that the farrah in the form of a ram has joined Ardashīr.[1] (The story is a recasting of an ancient legend also attached to Cyrus.[2])

Ardashīr kills Ardavān and vows not to leave a single soul from Ardavān's house alive. When Ardashīr discovers that a girl whom he has inadvertently married, is Ardavān's daughter[3] (or his cousin[4] or the daughter of Farrukhān, another Arsacid prince)[5] who had been brought up in obscurity, he is outraged and orders his vizier Abarsām to execute her. Learning that the girl is pregnant, Abarsām hides her in the basement of his house, and thereafter rears her child, a son, Shāpūr. Years later, Ardashīr, who remains childless, confides his contrition to his vizier, who thereupon reveals to the king that he has no cause for regret. But before Abarsām brings Shāpūr to the king, he asks him to open a box which he had left with the king when the princess was placed in his charge. In the box is Abarsām's severed manhood as proof of his honour.[6] According to the *Kārnāmag* version,[7] however, Ardavān's daughter tries to poison Ardashīr, but she is discovered and is entrusted to the high priest to receive her punishment. The high priest hides her and brings up Shāpūr.[8]

During Shāpūr I's military expedition to the east, the ruler of Hatra makes incursions into Mesopotamia, inflicting ruin on the land. Upon his return, Shāpūr lays seige to Hatra, but the fortress proves impregnable. At length, the ruler's daughter, who has fallen in love with Shāpūr, extracts a promise of marriage from him and betrays the citadel; Shāpūr then conquers the city and lays it waste. At the nuptials he learns of the great care and kindness that his bride's father had lavished upon her, whereupon Shāpūr orders the girl to be put to death for her ingratitude. (See below, p. 401.)

Through his mother Hurmazd I is a grandson of Mihrak, one of Ardashīr's enemies, whom he had defeated and killed. Having been

[1] *Kārnāmag* iv. 11; *Shāh-nāma*, 1926ff.

[2] Herodotus I. 107–30; Ctesias, *Pers.* 2; see A. Bauer, "Die Kyros-Sage und Verwandtes", *SWAW* c (1882), 495.

[3] Ṭabarī I. 923ff; Firdausī, 1963ff; Ibn al-Balkhī, 59. See Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 26, n. 1, and Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, 40.

[4] *Nihāyat al-irab*, 218.

[5] Dīnawarī, 44.

[6] Firdausī, pp. 2003–4.

[7] xiv-xv.

[8] See p. 1187.

forewarned by astrologers that a descendant of Mihrak is to inherit his throne, Ardashīr seeks to uproot Mihrak's house. Mihrak's daughter, however, has taken refuge with shepherds. Ardashīr's son Shāpūr meets her one day after a hunting expedition, when thirst drives him to her village. He admires her beauty and takes her for his wife, overcoming her frightened reluctance to marry him by promising that he will keep her lineage secret. But at a children's polo game their son, Hurmazd, attracts Ardashīr's attention by demonstrating unwonted boldness when he rushes towards the king to retrieve a ball. Ardashīr is also struck by the resemblance of Hurmazd to himself. Shāpūr is forced to reveal the truth, and Ardashīr is relieved by the turn the astrologer's prophecy has taken.

Shāpūr II showed clear signs of wisdom even as a child. For instance, he solved the problem of crowding and confusion on one of the bridges near the palace by ordering the construction of another bridge, so that one might serve the people coming from one direction, and the other the people going in the opposite direction.

Yazdgird the Sinner was suspicious, oppressive and particularly hard on the nobles, who were united in their hatred of him. They prayed to God for relief. One day when the king was in Gurgān, an excellent, rare horse appeared near the royal tent. No one succeeded in breaking it, yet the horse submitted readily to the king. As the king was caressing it, the horse kicked him fatally,[1] thus putting an end to his tyranny. People believed that the horse was in fact an angel of God.

After Yazdgird's death, the nobles barred his children from the throne and proclaimed as their king Khusrau, a descendant of Ardashīr I. At that time Yazdgird's son, Bahrām Gōr, was staying with Mundhir, the vassal king of Ḥīra. At Bahrām Gōr's birth his father was informed by court astrologers that while the child would indeed ascend the throne, he would be brought up in a foreign land. Yazdgird had sent him to Ḥīra, where he received a thorough education in the arts of riding, warfare and hunting, as well as in philosophy and the literary arts. He performed many feats of strength and dexterity as a young prince. In one instance, he shot a lion and a wild ass with the same arrow killing both at a single stroke.[2] In another instance, dared by a female

[1] Details of the alleged incident are somewhat different in our sources; see Ṭabarī I. 849; Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, 164; Ibn Baṭrīq, 176; Tha'ālibī, 549; Ibn al-Balkhī, 74. Firdausī, 2094ff., tells of his death in Tūs by a sea-horse.

[2] Ṭabarī I. 857; Tha'ālibī, 543–4. Ṭabarī has an unusually lengthy account of Bahrām's early life and education; I. 854–60.

companion, he proposed to "sew" together the ear and foot of a deer with an arrow. First he shot an arrow which barely touched the deer's ear. When the deer then scratched its ear, he let fly another arrow, which "sewed" its foot and ear together.[1] When he heard of the rally to Khusrau, he marched with Mundhir to the capital, claiming his father's crown. The nobles were duly impressed with his handsome looks, his eloquence and his promise to avoid the ways of his father. But what eventually decided the outcome was Bahrām's physical prowess. He proposed that the crown be placed between two hungry lions and that whoever was able to carry it off should be declared king. Khusrau deferred to him, and Bahrām, after killing the lions, took possession of the crown.[2]

Bahrām was given to the pleasures of the hunt, of merrymaking and of love. The Khaqan of the Turks[3] took advantage of this levity; he invaded the eastern provinces and threatened to overrun the country. The nobles, in despair lest Bahrām fail them, began to make advances to the Khaqan in self-protection. But they had underestimated Bahrām's ability and resolve. Ostensibly going on a hunting expedition, along with the traditional hounds and falcons[4], he set out toward Azerbaijan with a select corps of fighters, paid homage to the sacred fire Āzar-gushnasp, marched toward Armenia, and then turned toward Khurāsān via the Caspian provinces with utmost speed. Descending upon the Khaqan in a surprise attack, he killed him, took his wife and family prisoner and captured much booty, astounding even his own people by his skill and courage.

Among the stories told of subsequent Sasanian kings are those of the ingenious tricks played by the Hephthalites on Pērōz, leading to his defeat and death; the story of Kavād's marriage, in the course of his flight to the east, to the daughter of a noble farmer (*dehgān*) only to find later, to his pleasant surprise, that she (the mother of Khusrau I) was a descendant of Frēdōn; several anecdotes about the administration of justice by Khusrau I, his fairness and his severity; a number of stories about Khusrau's wise counsellor Buzurgmihr: how he solved the riddle of chess (a game devised by an Indian king and presented to the Iranian court), how he devised the game of backgammon (*nard*) as a counter to the Indian challenge and how he solved riddles presented by the

[1] Firdausī, 2086–7; Tha'ālibī, 541–2.

[2] Ibn Baṭrīq's account, p. 176, is somewhat different and does not mention the episode of the two lions.

[3] i.e. the Hephthalites. The Turks were not yet the immediate neighbours of Iran.

[4] Dīnawarī, p. 58.

Byzantine emperor; a series of yarns told of Bahrām Chōbīn, the general who rebelled against his king, Hurmazd IV, and incidents concerning Gurdōya, Bahrām's sister; stories about the fabulous wealth of Khusrau II, the splendour of his court, his treasures, his famous horse Shabdēz, his musicians, and his love for Shīrīn, which has been the subject of numerous romances in Persian literature; and finally the somewhat fictionalized account of Khusrau II's trial, imprisonment and execution by order of his son, Shīrōy. All these stories are brought together in the *Shāh-nāma*. Although probably some of them did not figure in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, they can give an idea of the kinds of stories that were woven around the kings' lives, and also of the element of entertainment in the national history.[1]

CHRONOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY

There is a great deal of variation in Islamic sources as to the regnal years of the Iranian kings from Gayōmard to Kai Kavād – a fact that drew comments from the astronomer Abū Ma'shar of Balkh (d. A.D. 886) and rightly baffled the historian Ḥamza of Iṣfahān. According to Ḥamza,[2] Abū Ma'shar attributed the confusion to several uncertain periods of interregnum in Iranian history. He notes, for instance, the gap of more than 170 years between Gayōmard and Hōshang, the unspecified number of years following Afrāsiyāb's withdrawal from Iran subsequent to his reign of 12 years there, and again the years between Zāb and Kai Kavād. The basic chronological scheme, which must have prevailed also in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, can, however, be easily established. By all accounts the third millennium of the "mixed state" after the attack of Ahriman began with Frēdōn and ended with the conversion of Gushtāsp in the thirtieth year of his reign. The second millennium was taken up entirely by Dahāk's rule, which, according to all sources, lasted 1,000 years. The first millennium then comprised the reign of the earlier kings from Gayōmard to and including Jamshēd. It appears that originally Jamshēd, who, as the first man, must have headed the list of kings, also reigned for 1,000 years. This situation is already indicated in Yasht 17.30 and confirmed by the *Vendīdād* 2.20, which gives Jamshēd three times 300 years before he began building the Var. The missing 100 years may have been the time needed to build the Var, or possibly his 100 years in exile. But in the scheme which was worked out by

[1] See below, p. 400f. [2] Pp. 8–11.

Zoroastrian priests, the first millennium began with Ahriman's attack under the zodiacal sign of Libra and was divided as follows. Gayōmard was given 30 years, i.e., the same number of years that he was allowed to live on after he had been wounded by Ahriman. For 40 years his seed remained hidden in the earth, before the rhubarb plant grew and produced the first couple. After 50 years without marital union the couple began to have offspring – thus far a total of 120 years. Hōshang ruled for 40 years and Tahmōrath for 30, the same number which had already been mentioned in Yasht 19.29 as the number of years that Tahmōrath rode on Ahriman. Jamshēd was given 616 or 616½ years[1] before Dahāk overwhelmed him, and another 100 years as a fugitive from Dahāk. These periods total 906 or 906½ years, and therefore an interregmun of 94 or 93½ years was assigned to the gap between the birth of the first offspring of the first couple and Hōshang to make a total of 1,000 years and the first millennium of the mixed state.[2] This is the scheme given in the *Bundahishn* xxxvi, and the one that emerges from the preferred accounts of Bīrūnī, 103, and Ḥamza, 64.

The First Millennium of the "Mixed State"

	Years
Gayōmard	30
His seed hidden in the earth	40
The first couple without progeny	50
Progeny of the first couple to Hōshang	94/93½
Hōshang	40
Tahmōrath	30
Jamshēd	616/616½
Jamshēd in exile	100
Total	1000

With the weakening of Zoroastrian traditions and its millennial reckonings in Islamic times, the chronology of the early kings became the subject of considerable confusion, so that often the same author, confronted with varying versions, gave different accounts of the regnal years of the same ruler. Part of the confusion no doubt is due to variations which must go back to pre-Islamic times. It would hardly be plausible to think that Sasanian sources presented a uniform chronological table. Besides, the oral transmission of history with its multiple origins continued through Sasanian and, indeed, post-Sasanian times and made for variants of different kinds. It would be reasonable to

[1] *Mēnōg ī Khrād* xxvii. 25; Ṭabarī I. 176; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 113.
[2] Cf. Christensen, *Types*, 124ff; Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* I, 504ff.

believe, however, that the semi-official version of Iranian history, the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, which bore the imprint of Khusrau I's reforms, had broadly adopted the chronology given above. Hōshang's regnal years may have already been given in the Sasanian Avesta or its commentaries, but no definite proof exists to this effect. The regnal years of Jamshēd look arbitrary and difficult to explain, but if we start from the assumption that his years were determined by subtracting a number of life-spans and reigning years from 1,000, an easy explanation ensues. It must be assumed, as noted above, that the 94/93½ interposed years covered the generations between Mashya and Hōshang, namely Fravāk and Siyāmak. It would have been unnatural to assign specific years to the first couple and to Hōshang, but not to the generations between them. We must assume that these details simply have not survived in our sources. Christensen's view that the 93½ years were agreed upon by first deciding on 616 years for Jamshēd's reign[1] (for which no internal explanation can be given) cannot be maintained.

The entire second millennium is taken up by the reign of Dahāk. The third millennium of the "mixed state" begins under the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius with the rule of Frēdōn. The regnal years in this millennium, following the listing of the *Bundahishn* xxxvi. 7 (which is reflected also in the Islamic sources), are as follows:

The Third Millennium of the "Mixed State"

	Years
Frēdōn	500
Manūchihr (including the 12 years of Afrāsiyāb's rule in Iran)	120
Zāb	5
Kai Kavād	15
Kāvūs	150
Kai Khusrau	60
Kai Luhrāsp	120
Kai Gushtāsp, until his conversion	30
Total	1000

The above divisions of the millennial scheme must be the result of priestly schematizing, as can be seen from the fact that Gushtāsp's conversion marks the beginning of a millennium, and that the Kayanians, despite their prominence, do not have a millennium to themselves. Rather, they are uncomfortably put together with Frēdōn and his Pishdadian successors.

The next three millennia of the "mixed state", which take us to the end of the world, each begins with a holy figure: Zoroaster, Hōshēdar,

[1] *Types*, 124–5.

and Hōshēdarmāh, the last two being Zoroaster's future sons.[1] The world will end when the Sōšyant, the third son of the prophet, appears towards the end of the 6th and last millennium (i.e. the 12th if we take into account the millennia of the spiritual (*mēnōg*) state and the creation of the tangible world (*gētīg*)).

The 4th millennium was conceived as encompassing the history of the world from Gushtāsp's conversion to the coming of Hōshēdar, the first Saviour. It begins under the rule of Capricorn and is divided as follows:

The Fourth Millennium of the "Mixed State"

	Years
Gushtāsp, after conversion	90
Bahman, son of Isfandiyār	112
Humāy Chihrāzād	30
Dārā I	12
Dārā II	14
Alexander	14
The Arsacids	266
Total	538

The year 538 is the year of Ardashīr's accession according to Zoroastrian tradition. The striking feature of this chronology is that 266 years, instead of some 500 years, are assigned to the Arsacids. The *Bundahishn* (xxxvi. 8) has 284 years for the Arsacid rule, but the span given in all the sources which reflect the *Khwadāy-nāmag* more reliably is 266. Mas'ūdī, who was well aware of the discrepancy between the traditional and the actual length of Arsacid rule, gives the time between the death of Alexander and Ardashīr Pāpagān as 517 years,[2] and attributes the shortening of the Arsacids' reign to a deliberate manipulation by the Sasanians out of antagonism towards their predecessors. In fact, the figure seems to have been arrived at innocently in Sasanian times through faulty reckoning.

To understand this process, it must first be recognized that under the Parthians the people in Babylonia continued the use of the Seleucid era, which began in 312 B.C. This era was still being used in chronology when Ardashīr seized the Parthian kingdom in the year 538 of the Seleucid era. The Iranians, however, had forgotten the origin of this era and considered it indigenous. When the Sasanian dynasty was established and Zoroastrianism became the official religion of the state, the millennial scheme was grafted upon the Seleucid era. It came to be

[1] See pp. 355ff.

[2] *Murūj* II. 236; *al-Tanbīh*, pp. 97–8.

believed that the era had in fact begun not with the Seleucids but with the coming of Zoroaster at the beginning of the 9th millennium. Thus the first year of Ardashīr's reign coincided with the year 3538 of the Zoroastrian world year. Now, the Zoroastrians were in possession of a tradition which placed the date of Zoroaster, or more precisely, Gushtāsp's conversion, 258 years before Alexander.[1] By adding the 14 years of Alexander's reign and subtracting the resulting 272 years from the year of Ardashīr's accession to the throne, they arrived at 266 years, which they thought encompassed the reign of the Arsacids:[2]

Ardashīr's accession, dated from the assumed coming of Zoroaster,		538
Subtracted are: the years from Zoroaster to Alexander, according to Zoroastrian tradition	258	
and the years of Alexander's reign	14	
		−272
The years between Alexander and Ardashīr, i.e., the Arsacid reign		266

The Sasanians had no recollection of the Seleucids. For them the period of the "petty kings" (*Mulūk al-ṭawā'if*), which betokened the Parthian era, began immediately after Alexander. The chronological scheme which was thus established limited the rest of history before the coming of the first Saviour to 462 years, i.e. 1000 minus 538. As time went by, the coming of the Sōšyant seemed even closer. It can be imagined how the hope of the Zoroastrian community of believers must have been pinned on the event when the country was overrun by the conquering Muslim armies at about the end of the millennium. And yet, as the expected coming of the Saviour continued to elude them, attempts were made at different times to give ever later dates for the anticipated event. A clear instance of such a postponement is seen in the *Zand ī Vahman Yasht*, IX. 1, where the birth of Hōshēdar is predicted for the year 1800 (after Zoroaster), a delay of 800 years.

[1] Namely, the total of the first five figures in the table on p. 386.

[1] For details, see Hildegard Lewy, "The Genesis of the Faulty Persian Chronology", *JAOS* LXIV (1944), 197–214; Taqizadeh, "The Era of Zoroaster", *JRAS* 1947, 33–40; Henning, *Zoroaster*, 37–8. See also chap. 21 (*a*), pp. 781ff. O. Klima, however, assumes that Ardashīr did engage in a deliberate falsification of chronology in order to dispel a belief among the people that the end of Zoroaster's millennium was at hand. His argument is based mainly on the assumption that Mani must have considered himself also ūšēdar, a Zoroastrian Saviour whose appearance at the end of the millennium had been prophesied; therefore he places Zoroaster's date at 754 B.C.; see his "The Date of Zoroaster", *ArOr* XXVII (1959), pp. 556–64, and *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus* (Dissertationes Orientales 37, Prague, 1977), pp. 131–5. For a review of the dates recently proposed for Zoroaster, see E. Yarshater, *Central Asiatic Journal* XXV (1981), pp. 34ff.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF WESTERN AND SOUTHERN IRAN

As already noted, the Iranian account of the past is devoid of the historical tradition of western and southern Iran. Accordingly, the history of the Median and Achaemenian empires does not figure in it. After treating of the Pishdadian and Kayanian dynasties, the report passes, with only a brief mention of the Arsacids, to Sasanian history. Further, the national tradition does not perceptibly include myths and legends pertaining to western and southern Iran, except as they relate to the Sasanian period.

There is little doubt, however, that the Iranians of the west and south must have had their own tradition of myths and legends. If these had come down to us, we would, no doubt, notice many similarities between them and those of the east – similarities closer than those seen between the Vedic and Avestan traditions. The Elamite treasury tablets found at Persepolis record a number of personal names such as Yama (Yima, Jam), Yamakka (*Yamaka), Yamakshedda (Av. Yima.xšaēta, Pers. Jamshēd), Zamashba (Jāmāsp) and Narishanka (Nairyo.saŋha), all mythological or legendary names known from the eastern Iranian tradition.[1] Also Ctesias (*Pers.* 10) gives the name of the usurper of the throne after Cambyses as Esphendadates (Isfandiyār).

The occurrence of such names may indicate an early spread of eastern legends to the south and west, but it is more likely that they attest to a pan-Iranian fund of myths and legends which was inherited from the times when the Iranians still lived on the steppes, but which was modified in local traditions.

The existence of such a tradition in the west is in fact confirmed by the accounts of the classical writers, whose contact was mainly with western and southern Iran. One such legend is that of the birth and upbringing of Cyrus and his victory over his grandfather, Astyages. Ctesias, the physician of Ardashīr II, has recorded one version of this legend (*Pers.* 2) and Herodotus another (I. 107–30), the latter with some attempt at rationalization. Ctesias' story, as Gutschmidt has observed,[2] has a Median ring to it, whereas Herodotus's represents a Persian rendering. A parallel can easily be drawn between the legend of Cyrus and

[1] Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 88ff, 96; Gershevitch, "Amber at Persepolis", 177f, 212ff, 245; *TPS* 1969 (1970), 165ff; R. Schmitt, "Kritische Bemerkungen zur Deutung iranischer Namen in Elamischen", *KZ* LXXXIV (1970), 11ff; Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana*, nos. 8. 1972–4; 8. 1821; 8. 1243.

[2] *ZDMG* XXXIV (1880), 586.

that of Kai Khusrau. In both cases an alien king (Astyages–Afrāsiyāb) orders an Iranian prince (Cyrus–Kai Khusrau) and the son of his own daughter (Mandada–Farangīs) to be slain; but the infant is saved, is brought up in secret and later overcomes his grandfather.[1] Gutschmid had early directed attention to the fact that the story related by Ctesias regarding the birth and youth of Cyrus is transferred in its basic features to Ardashīr Pāpagān.[2] In the stories of Dārā[3] and Shāpūr I[4] we have additional examples of this legend.

Some other legends of western Iran may be seen in the story of how a groom of Darius I got his master's horse to neigh at the right time and so won the throne for him (Herodotus III. 84ff); the rearing of Achaemenes by an eagle (Aelian, *De natura animalium* XII. 21), which brings to mind the rearing of Zāl by the Sīmurgh; and the love-story of Zariadres and Odatis (see below, pp. 467–8).

Whether the western Iranians ever created an epic literature comparable to that of the eastern Iranians is open to doubt. And yet the information obtained from classical sources, meagre as it is, clearly indicates the existence of a body of myths and legends which is distinct from that of the east. The question arises as to the circumstance of their omission from the national tradition. An even more remarkable omission is the almost complete disappearance from memory of the Medes and the Achaemenians.[5] That the history of two periods of outstanding political and military achievement should have been submerged is puzzling enough; that they should be lost from a tradition collected and recorded by the Sasanians, themselves originating from the homeland of the Achaemenians, is extraordinary and demands explanation. No deliberate omission of this kind could be attributed to the Sasanian period, since not only were the Sasanians themselves from the south, but also, in challenging the authority of the Arsacids, they ostensibly intended to restore to the country the kind of national government which had prevailed before Alexander.[6] It therefore stands to reason that they would not have neglected to incorporate the history of the Achaemenians with their own if they had had a clear memory of it.[7]

This historical amnesia could have developed only in Parthian times. Achaemenian court records were dispersed and finally disappeared after

[1] Cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, § 3.
[2] *Kleine Schriften* III. 133.
[3] *Dārab-nāma of Tarsūsī* I. 10ff.
[4] *Kārnāmag*, xiv-xv; *Shāh-nāma*, 1963ff.
[5] Cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 3, n. 1; *Nationalepos*, § 12; Christensen, *Kayanides*, 147.
[6] Ṭabarī I. 814; Ḥamza, 44–46; *Nāma-yi Tansar*, 40, 42.
[7] See Yarshater, "Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?", 517f.

Alexander. Cuneiform and Elamite alphabets fell into disuse and records in those scripts became unintelligible. During the long expanse of Parthian rule, while the Iranian legendary history, as developed in the east, was being cultivated by Parthian princes and their vassal courts, the historical events of the west and south gradually faded from memory. Thus eventually the eastern epic traditon became that of the nation, providing a historical structure with which all Iranians could identify.

Mary Boyce has argued that the legends of the Kayanians were virtually confined to the east during the whole extent of Parthian rule and beyond, until the Sasanians decided to record the material as part of the "national" history.[1] This view, in the opinion of the present writer, gives rise to several problems which can easily be avoided if we assume that eastern legends spread to the south and west during Parthian times and absorbed or replaced local legends. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why the Sasanians should abandon their own oral tradition for that of the Parthians. Also their reasons for suddenly deciding to collect and record the legends of the eastern provinces and those of the Arsacids, their erstwhile enemies, to the exclusion of their own is hard to fathom. A desire to win the support of the eastern provinces when attacks from the north-east may have shaken the allegiance of these provinces is hardly convincing, given the little bearing that "written" literature could have had on the attitude of the population.

In fact the linguistic evidence from Armenian sources indicates that the Kayanian legends were introduced into Armenia in Parthian times. The Armenian forms Shavarsh (Siyāvush;[2] cf. Khwarazmian Savus or Savuš in Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 35, 18) and Spandarat (Isfandiyār), two heroes of the national saga,[3] show Parthian features. If the Kayanian saga could be introduced into Armenia in Parthian times, there is little reason to doubt its introduction into Media or Persia during the same period.[4]

Three factors appear to have helped to spread these legends beyond their homeland. First, the Parthian hegemony and its attendant political and cultural influence for nearly half a millennium. Second, the intrinsic

[1] "Zariadres", 474; "Some remarks", 49ff. See also p. 1161 in this vol.

[2] See Justi, *Namenbuch*, s.v. Syāwarsan; H. Hübschmann, *Persische Studien* (Strassburg 1895), 261; Marquart, *Wehrot und Arang*, 21 n. 91; and Boyce, "Zariadres", 472ff.

[3] Justi, *op. cit.*, 307 a; cf. Spandiat, the Perso-Armenian form, *ibid*, 308 b; Marquart, "Beiträge", 639, n. 4; H. Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1897), 74.

[4] Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, § 5.

attraction of the legends and their literary and recreational qualities. Third, the implicit religious sanction that these essentially secular legends had received through reference to them in the Yashts. The Sasanian Avesta, to judge by the *Dēnkard* summary, incorporated many of the Kayanian legends; this circumstance alone must have facilitated the spread of the eastern saga through oral transmission, in nearly the same way that instruction in the Qur'ān promoted the stories of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*).

If the Sasanian scribes were in fact recording eastern legends which had been confined to their homeland we would not have found so many traces of western and southern adjustments in them. Čaēčasta would not have been identified, for instance, with a lake in Azarbāijān, while Fārs and Stakhr would have had no place in Pishdadian and Kayanian legends.[1] Such adjustments can point only to the circulation of these legends in the south and west for a long period before they were recorded. That some names from the eastern epic cycles became popular among the Sasanians from the second half of the 5th century can hardly be taken as proof of a contemporary recording of these cycles; it indicates, rather, a revival of patriotic spirit on account of renewed raids by nomadic tribes on the eastern frontiers. Such names (Kapāt = Kavād, Manūchihr) had been borne much earlier by the kings of Persis, as evidenced by their coins.[2] As it was, when Ardashīr rebelled against his Parthian overlord, the long duration of the Arsacid reign had already given Iran something approaching a national saga and a national history, casting into oblivion the memory of the Medes and the Persians and overshadowing or absorbing local legends. It was this eastern tradition turned "national" which was committed to writing in Sasanian times.

WRITTEN FORMS OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY

The existence in Sasanian times of books devoted to the factual as well as the legendary history of past kings is supported to some degree by internal evidence. For instance, in the *Shāh-nāma*, when Hormazd IV is dethroned and imprisoned, he asks for a knowledgeable reciter of history to come forward with "a book" to keep him diverted by relating stories of the ancient kings.[3] Mas'ūdī reports[4] that he had seen in the

[1] See further pp. 402–3.
[2] See chap. 8(*b*) p. 305.
[3] P. 2679; cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, § 12.
[4] *Tanbīh*, p. 104.

possession of a noble Persian family of Istakhr a huge illustrated manuscript describing many sciences of the Iranians, their history, their monuments and their policies, as well as portraits of twenty-seven Sasanian rulers – twenty-five male and two female – which had been copied from works in the treasury of the Persian kings in A.H. 113. This information is supported by Ḥamza's systematic account[1] of the official portrait of each Sasanian ruler, accounts which must ultimately be based on official records. The description that Mas'ūdī gives of Ardashīr Pāpagān's portrait – the king with red shirt, sky-blue trousers, green crown set in gold, standing with a lance in his hand – corresponds to a similar description by Ḥamza and tends to support the authenticity of the two accounts. Ḥamza's descriptions are confirmed in turn by archaeological evidence: a portrait of Khusrau I found on a rock-crystal bowl accords with Ḥamza's description of his portrait.[2] We may safely assume, then, that in the Sasanian court a record was kept of the chief events under each ruler, together with his portrait. The existence of such records finds further support in Agathias (27.2; 30.4), who makes oblique reference to official annals and royal divans by quoting reports that he had received from a knowledgeable Syrian friend, Sergius. How far back such records started, and whether they had a precedent in the Parthian court in Ctesiphon, is hard to determine. But it is almost certain that such records eventually included also an account of the legendary history of the nation, probably with portraits of all the Pishdadian and Kayanian kings, who were as real to the people as were the Sasanian kings. Such traditional portraits were current until recently in Iran.

The compilation of history and the publication of political tracts could further political aims, and the Sasanians were adept practitioners of these arts, as shown by the "Letter of Tansar" and by the way in which the Mazdakites were presented by the Sasanian official tradition. (Niẓām al-Mulk echoes the Sasanian practice in Islamic times.) Khusrau I, in particular, made use of such works to expound his ideas and policies. But we need not assume that the compilation of historical works was undertaken first under Khusrau I. Shāpūr I recorded his victories, his pious deeds and the names of the dignitaries of his own and his father's court in a great inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht. He even recorded an archery feat at Naqsh-i Rajab. We know also that he encouraged

[1] Pp. 48ff.

[2] See Ḥamza, 57; F. Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien* (Berlin, 1922), 144; *SPA*, 138; Christensen, *L'Iran*, 398–9.

translations from Greek and Sanskrit. It is most unlikely that he would not have sponsored works of history as well. Sasanian propaganda against the Parthians must have provided a strong motive for the sponsorship of political tracts and the writing of "new" histories.

Along with the semi-official renderings of the national history, there existed in Sasanian times a number of other works which had some bearing on the record of the past. One was the *Gāh-nāmag*, which according to Mas'ūdī's *Tanbīh*[1] treated of official ranks in the Sasanian empire; another was the *Ā'īn-nāmag*, "Book of Rules [of Propriety]", which portrayed the national customs and manners, and the proper conduct expected of kings, nobles and the other classes of society. To judge from their reflection in the Perso-Arabic sources, these books, too, must have been rhetorical in tone, seeking to extol and establish the virtues associated with Iranian tradition. We must assume that there were other works dealing with administrative matters, as well as books on individual kings or national heroes.[2] Known examples are the *Kār-nāmag* of Ardashīr Pāpagān and the historical romance featuring Bahrām Chōbīn, upon which several historians in addition to Firdausī have drawn. Some of these works must have been incorporated either in their entirety or in an abridged version in the later recensions of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. We find, for instance, that a complete version of the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* is reproduced by Firdausī and an abridged form by Ṭabarī and Tha'ālibī.

THE CHARACTER AND THE ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY

As already observed, the historical tradition which developed in Sasanian times was concerned less with determining the facts of history than with providing an insight into the past and a vision of the future. It served to illustrate, promote and bolster religious and national ideals as conceived by the leaders of the Sasanian state. It was also meant to educate and entertain. Thus it combined four chief aspects: religious, socio-political, didactic and recreational.

(1) *The religious aspect.* In Iran religion has always played a central rôle in the national life. Far from confining itself merely to individual relations between man and some supernatural power, it has encompassed the whole spectrum of social and political life and has formulated legal

[1] P. 104.

[2] Cf. Inostrantsev, *Sasanidskye Etyudi*, 22ff.

and political norms of conduct. In Sasanian Persia, with the firm union of church and state, the national history necessarily acquired a religious colouring and a good deal of non-heroic and mantic material was added to it.

The Kayanian epic cycle originated, we may recall, as a literature of adventure, war and heroism. Heroic literature, however, is often followed by a literature which tends to be preoccupied with the spiritual aspects of life and to respond to the intellectual and contemplative concerns of society. Composed in general by seers, prophets and saints, such literature reflects the views, sentiments and interests of a class different from the warriors and purports, not to entertain, but to inspire, inform and educate. The earliest example of mantic literature in Iran is the Gāthās of Zoroaster. As the Zoroastrian religion spread and its priesthood strengthened its hold, not only did religious literature flourish, but its spirit and outlook affected some of the earlier heroic literature also. The Sasanian literary heritage indicates that in Sasanian Iran both the heroic and the religious traditions flourished side by side: one in the domain of the minstrels and story tellers, and the other in that of the priesthood. Whereas the epic literature catered to the taste of the nobles (*āzādān*), the Avestan commentaries and the genre which is illustrated in the Pahlavī books of the 9th century reflected the religious concerns. The *Khwadāy-nāmag*, however, was a work of mixed content, despite its unmistakable core of a heroic nature. It was committed to writing during a period when the Zoroastrian religion was ascendant and in a formal alliance with the Sasanian court. Further, its compilation was the work of the scribal class (*dabīrān*), which, although serving primarily the king, the nobility and their courts, shared the priestly outlook by virtue of its training. Thus the *Khwadāy-nāmag* assumed a strong religious aspect – much stronger, we may suppose, than in its Perso-Arab renderings. Yet the *Khwadāy-nāmag* remained predominantly an epic history, much more so than the *Mahābhārāta*, the heroic nucleus of which is almost overshadowed by later accretions and elaborations of a non-heroic and religious nature.

The religious outlook and the priestly orientation of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* were revealed in a number of ways. At the court the *mōbads*, the astrologers (*akhtar-shumārān*), the wise men (*bakhradān*) and the men of learning (*dānāgān*) were always at hand and were regularly consulted on matters of consequence, and they were shown in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*

to be invariably right. A dualistic concept of the universe and its resultant ethical values pervaded the work. Historical events were understood chiefly in terms of the duality of good and evil, and Ahriman and his demons were ever present to inflict damage and distress on human existence and to corrupt men's minds. Yielding to their temptation entailed divine punishment, as evidenced by the fate of Jamshēd, Kāvūs, and Yazdgird I. Views and religious innovations to which the Zoroastrian church did not agree, such as Manichaean and Mazdakite teachings, were branded as heresy and were harshly condemned. Apart from echoing the religious concepts and values of Sasanian Persia, the *Khwadāy-nāmag* included many admonitions and didactic pronouncements, as well as other non-heroic material, such as throne addresses and an account of the progress of civilization under the early kings. Throne addresses, which in the *Shāh-nāma* almost always open with praise of God and thanks for his blessings, and vow to follow the path of religion and justice, bear a particularly moral and religious stamp.

Christensen, acutely aware of the two strains in the historical tradition, made a case for distinction between a "religious" and what he calls a "national" tradition in Sasaman times.[1] The religious tradition emphasized, according to him, the millennial scheme, the cosmic view of world history, the prophetic events of the future and the eschatological rôles of the immortal kings and heroes, as well as the intervention of the deities, demons, Amashaspands and the fravašis. It was particularly concerned with the life of the prophet and his house, the Gushtaspian cycle and the heroes of the religious wars, as well as with the early upholders of the faith and its first instructors (Av. *paoiryō.tkaēšas*). Kings and heroes who were believed to have supported the religion and to have respected the views of the mōbads received detailed and favourable treatment. These included Bahman, the defender of the faith; the Arsacid Vologeses (Balāsh), who ordered the collection of religious writings; Ardashīr Pāpagān, who united the country and brought the church and state together; Shāpūr II, who upheld orthodoxy; Bahrām V (Gōr), who gave free rein to the priests; Khusrau I, who crushed the Mazdakite heresy; and Yazdgird III, the last of the Zoroastrian kings.[2] Also mentioned were Tansar (or Tōsar), the minister of Ardashīr I; Ādurbād Mahrspandān, the high priest under Shāpūr II; and Mihr Narsē, the grand vizier of Yazdgird I and Bahrām V. Alexander remained a despicable figure and an enemy of the Iranian people;

[1] *Kayanides*, 35ff; *Gestes*, 33ff.

[2] Cf. *Zand ī Vahman Yasht* iii. 20–9.

Rustam, the slayer of Isfandiyār, received little attention, while Bahman satisfied religious zeal by destroying the house of Zāl.

This tradition is best seen in the summaries, given in Books VII–IX of the *Dēnkard*, of the lost Sasanian nasks of the Avesta and their commentary. It is further reflected in a number of Pahlavī books, more particularly the *Bundahishn*, chapters i–vii, xxix, xxxi–xxxvi.

On the other hand, says Christensen, in the "national" tradition, which reflected the taste of the court and the nobles, apocalyptic features, cosmic projections and eschatological accounts received less attention, the hagiography was omitted, and attention was focused primarily on the heroic exploits of kings and warriors. The defence of the fatherland and the protection of its boundaries and its institutions – a prime concern of the nationalist Sasanians – became the motivating force of the national history. Turanian warriors, rather than *kavis* and *karpans*, sorcerers and sorceresses, represented the menacing foes of the land. Dahāk and Afrāsiyāb were regarded as the "national" enemies of Iran in ages past, invading the country from foreign lands. Turan, seen as the antithesis of Iran, began to be the focus of all the bitterness and fury which long centuries of war with the nomads of the north-east had bred in Iranian hearts.

Christensen's distinction between a "religious" and a "national" tradition can hardly be denied, but his emphasis on the national tradition as a product of Sasanian times cannot be maintained. His explanation does not show sufficient appreciation of the oral tradition and of the nature of the heroic literature which already had had two brilliant phases – Kayanian and Parthian – before the Sasanian period. The fact is that while the Zoroastrian priesthood had kept producing works of a religious nature ever since the Gāthās were composed, making use of the legendary history for its own purposes, the epic tradition continued to flourish in the works of the minstrels and story tellers.[1] When in Sasanian times the different strands of oral literature were combined and written down, heroic stories, although they were cast in a frame compatible with the Sasanian stand and the religious outlook, remained basically a literature of entertainment attuned to secular interests, bolstering national pride and patriotism. The difference between the two kinds of literature will become evident if we compare for instance the account of Kai Khusrau in the *Dēnkard*[2] and the *Shāh-nāma*.[3] It is

[1] Cf. Boyce, "Some remarks", 45ff.

[2] VII. 1.39; VIII. 1.40; 13.14. IX. 16–19, 23.5, 58.10.

[3] Pp. 710ff.

to be noted that in Islamic times, too, although education was controlled by the clergy, the court and the people maintained and applied a non-clerical taste to the literature of entertainment.

(2) *The socio-political aspect.* The implicit court sanction of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and similar works made them instruments of the political ideology of a well-ordered, autocratic monarchy. Absolute obedience to the king was impressed upon the reader at every turn. It is preached in royal testaments and in the words of sages and the mōbads; it is also exemplified in the deeds of Iranian warriors and heroes. A dramatic example of such undisputed obedience is offered by Isfandiyār when he sets out to fight Rustam, even though he suspects that his royal father means to send him to his death. Hormazd I is said to have cut off his hand and sent it to his father, Shāpūr I, in order to assure him of his unswerving loyalty.[1]

The national history also served to promote a strict observance of distinction between the social classes. As is argued at length in the "Letter of Tansar", this discrimination was considered a necessary condition for a stable and orderly society, since nothing could undermine the social order more than class confusion and elimination of class differentiation.[2] To lend the distinction greater antiquity and therefore credence, the division of people into four estates is attributed by some sources to Jamshēd[3] and by some to Ardashīr.[4] A tradition preserved in the *Bundahishn* attributes them implicitly to Zoroaster, whose three sons were each set at the head of a social class.[5] The well-known story of the shoemaker in the *Shāh-nāma*[6] illustrates this point. He is prepared to provide Khusrau I with four million drachmas so that the king can equip his army in a desperate war against the Byzantines. All the shoemaker asks is that his son be allowed to enter the ranks of the bureaucrats (*dabīrān*). The king, however, forgoes the money rather than allow such a corruption of the ranks. The theory was that men of low birth, even if they acquired the necessary skills, were not fit to handle the responsibilities of men of noble birth, and so it was incumbent upon kings to preserve the purity of the higher classes. Thus, it was invariably understood that the people must be kept to their own stations and might

[1] Ṭabarī I. 833; Bal'amī, 899f.
[2] Pp. 12–19 (2nd ed. pp. 57–65); tr. Boyce, 37–44.
[3] *Shāh-nāma*, 24; Tha'ālibī 12; Ibn al-Balkhī, 30–1.
[4] Jāḥiz, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, 25ff.
[5] xxxv. 56; cf. E. Benveniste, "Les classes sociales dans la tradition avestique", *JA* CXXI (1932), 118ff. [6] Pp. 2545ff.

not aspire to cross the lines of social class.[1] At least this claim is what the nobility and the clergy maintained, although the speedy spread of the Mazdakite movement and the actions of some of the kings, like Yazdgird the Sinner, Kāvād and Hormazd IV, who were bent on curbing the power of the nobles, reveal that the views of the Sasanian establishment did not always give an accurate picture of the country's social and moral aspirations.

Many of the political views of the Sasanian establishment were presented through the "wisdom" literature. The chief ideas underlying the pronouncements on the conduct of government are: the necessity for subjects to show unfailing obedience to their sovereign, and for the sovereign to administer justice to his subjects, to maintain the religion, to ward off possible abuses by the ruling classes, to attend to the cultivation and prosperity of the land, and to relieve the needy from distress. The political theory behind such precepts is well defined and is referred to frequently. The words of a mōbad to Bahrām I, quoted by Mas'ūdī,[2] provide a good example: ". . . the kingdom will not prosper except by observance of the law, obedience to God Almighty and action in conformity with His prescriptions and prohibitions; and the law will not have vigour except through the king; and the king will not prosper except through men, and men will not prosper except by wealth, and there is no road to wealth except by the cultivation of the land, and there is no way to prosperity of the land except through the administration of justice; and justice is the criterion that God has established among people and placed in the charge of kings". Similar reasoning is attributed to Khusrau I: "The Kingdom depends on the army, the army on finance, the finance on taxes, taxes on land cultivation, and land cultivation on justice . . . ".[3]

(3) *The didactic aspect.* Didacticism can be seen in two different forms in the national history. One is a general tendency to conclude that good will be rewarded and evil punished. Although the facts as presented may not always support such a conclusion, the intent, which conforms to the Zoroastrian outlook, is unmistakable. The falls of Jamshēd and Kāvūs are attributed to their pride. Dahāk, notwithstanding his one-thousand-year rule, is eventually smitten and chained. Neither Tūr nor Afrāsiyāb escapes punishment for his murderous crimes. Fortune departs when its possessor ceases to be virtuous, and the fravašis of the just help only the righteous. The same principle generally holds for Sasanian times. Ardavān pays for the sins of Alexander. Those who invade

[1] See in particular Tha'ālibī, 608. [2] *Murūj* II. 172. [3] *Ibid.*, 210.

Ērānshahr at a time of her distress are eventually brought low, as is amply demonstrated by events in the reign of Shāpūr II. Heresy does not succeed, as the cases of Mānī and Mazdak prove – nor does encroachment on royal privileges, as is shown by the episode of Bahrām Chōbīn. Arrogance and oppression are chastized by divine providence. Yazdgird the Sinner is kicked to death by a horse believed to be a divine agent in disguise, and Shirōy does not profit by patricide, but is poisoned or, according to another account, dies of plague.[1]

The other form of didacticism in the national history is the explicit giving of advice and admonition which embody ethical principles. Numerous precepts concerning the best way of leading a wise and fruitful life are worked into the texts. As the moral and spiritual leader of the people, the king is responsible not only for ruling the country, but also for regulating its ethical and social life. Therefore, almost all prominent Persian kings are credited with pronouncements on the duties of kings and their subjects, the proper conduct of government, and appropriate personal behaviour. Accordingly, the national history includes a fair share of *andarz* or "wisdom" literature. This is found for the most part in the addresses of kings from the throne, their testaments to their successors, their epistles, and their sayings, and also in the advice provided by kings' advisors and ministers (notably Buzurgmihr, the vizier and counsellor of Khusrau I), the sages at the court, and the wise "men of yore" (*pīshīnīgān*). Maxims of observation or general truths[2] ("The world is a halting place and we are passing guests",[3] "Killing prevents killing"),[4] maxims of advisability ("Do not hoard grain, so that famine will not overtake you"),[5] and maxims of morality ("Do not wish for others what you would not wish for yourself"; "Who is worthy of praise? He whose hopes and fears are centred in God")[6] abound. Many of these categories merge of course and often a moral dictum is presented as also prudent and rewarding ("Shelter the wanderer so that you may find a home in the hereafter")[7] or as a general truth ("No prosperity accompanies a king's injustices").[8] As a rule, there is a tendency to make advice appear profitable, hence the impression of a pragmatic approach.

Ethical and admonitory pronouncements generally appear, not in the

[1] Tha'ālibī, 730; cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, 497.
[2] Following a categorization which the Chadwicks have employed in *The Growth of Literature*; cf. Boyce "Middle Persian Literature", 51ff.
[3] From the *dicta* of Khusrau I, Tha'ālibī, 607.
[4] *Op. cit.*, 483; cf. *Nāma-yi Tansar*, 14.
[5] From Ardashīr's *dicta*, Tha'ālibī, 482.
[6] From the advice of Buzurgmihr, *Shāh-nāma*, 2380.
[7] From the *dicta* of Ardashīr, Tha'ālibī, 482.
[8] *Op. cit.*, 482–3.

form of connected and coherent discourse, but in the shape of short, pithy and epigrammatic words of wisdom. Frequently they take the form of question and answer or riddle and solution. They do not reveal any full-fledged systematic philosophical approach or theory, but generally they combine the dictates of religion and the requirements of common sense. The guiding principle of a "wise" life appears to be "moderation" (*padmān*).[1] The dictates of experience and the words of the "ancients" carry great weight. Asceticism is not advocated, but the transience of life, the importance of leaving a good name, the wisdom of detachment from worldly pleasures and the avoidance of all forms of excess are stressed. A mystical outlook does not belong to Sasanian wisdom literature and is alien to Zoroastrian tenets.

(4) *The recreational aspect.* Entertainment as an aspect of the national history is reflected partly in the style in which the Sasanian historiographers composed their text and partly in its content. History was written not as a "critical" exposition, but as an engaging narrative of events adorned with elements of wonder, fantasy and wit. Hyperbole and metaphor were essential to its style. When an episode lent itself to epic treatment, history rose to the level of saga. The Yashts of the Avesta had already displayed marked literary qualities, the Parthian bards had composed many poetic or dramatic pieces, and the authors of the Sasanian histories could draw upon both sources. The Islamic renderings of a number of events, such as Frēdōn's victory over Dahāk, the tragedy of Ēraj, the vengeance of Manūchihr, the ordeal of Siyāvush, the expeditions of Gōdarz and Gēv against Afrāsiyāb, the wars of Kai Khusrau, and the Gushtaspian cycle, as well as many episodes of Rustam's career, echo the poetical quality of the original epics, and their rendering by Firdausī raises them to the highest level of their genre.

As for the content, apart from the tales of adventure expected in a work of epic character, elements of popular tales and legends were introduced to further engage the interest of the reader. For instance, all the major Islamic sources include in the account of Shāpūr II a report in the nature of a popular tale according to which the Iranian king goes alone on a spying mission to the Roman camp where he is discovered and caught by the enemy and bound in a straitjacket of drying animal hide, but finally sets himself free and leads his army to victory.[2] The

[1] Cf. Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight*, 285f.; de Menasce, *Dēnkard* III. 286.

[2] Ṭabari I. 844; Ibn Baṭrīq I. 119–20; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 181–2; Firdausī, 2036ff; Tha'ālibī, 521ff; Ibn al-Balkhī, 69–71; cf. Dīnawarī, 49.

many amorous adventures of Bahrām V, the tales of his hunting skills, and his exploits in India[1] belong to this category. So does the story of the man from the Hephthalite camp who had his limbs cut off in order to gain credence in the eyes of King Pērōz, saying he had been mutilated by the Hephthalite king. (See pp. 379ff. for other examples.)

Of course it is not always feasible to draw a line between epic legends and popular tales, since much depends on diction and style. Certain tales, like some floating legends, are attached to several figures. The story of the girl who betrayed her father during a siege (see above, p. 380) is told in connection not only with Shāpūr I[2], but also with Ardashīr[3] and Shāpūr II.[4] The motif of a king or a famous warrior going incognito to the stronghold of the enemy to gather intelligence or to carry out a stratagem is attributed to Qārin (Kārēn),[5] Rustam,[6] Isfandiyār,[7] and Ardashīr,[8] as well as to Shāpūr II.[9] The exchange of riddles between royal courts, with the usual provision that whoever fails to solve the riddle should become a tributary of the other,[10] is another floating motif in popular tales, as is the sending of symbolic objects to convey a message of contempt, humiliation or the reverse.[11]

Anecdotes could serve as a veiled expression of satire. Such is, for instance, the story Mas'ūdī tells of Bahrām II and the mōbad who wanted to warn him of the consequences of his confiscation of land and property. One day at the hunt the king and the mōbad overhear the conversation of two owls. At the king's request the mōbad interprets their dialogue: the female says that she will marry her companion if he will give her twenty villages ruined under the reigning king; the male responds that if the present king's rule continues he, the owl, can well afford to give her a thousand such villages.[12]

Sasanian authors wrote in an age of faith. They were not hindered by the limitations of "reason" and the requirements of plausibility. The miraculous and the fantastic were to them common occurrences. Therefore, tales of demons, fabulous animals and birds, supernatural events, anachronistic stories and elements of popular superstition could easily gain a place in the pages of their histories.

1 Ṭabarī I. 854ff; Tha'ālibī, 624ff.
2 Ṭabarī I. 827ff.; Tha'ālibī, 489ff.
3 Ibn Baṭrīq I. 106–7.
4 Dīnawarī, 50; *Shāh-nāma*, 2003. See Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 33, n. 4. For a discussion of the story see Christensen, "La princesse sur la feuille de myrte", *AO* XIV (1936), 241–57.
5 *Shāh-nāma*, 116ff.
6 *Ibid.*, 234.
7 *Ibid.*, 1608.
8 *Ibid.*, 1958.
9 See above, p. 400.
10 *Shāh-nāma*, 2461ff; Tha'ālibī, 624ff, 633ff.
11 See for instance Dīnawarī, 83; Bal'amī, 1080; Tha'ālibī, 657; Ṭabarī I. 694ff.
12 *Murūj* II. 169ff.

NATIONAL HISTORY AS A MIRROR OF SASANIAN CONDITIONS

In the national history, vestiges of archaic times survive in the descriptions of warfare. Single combats, use of such weapons as the mace and lasso, exchanges of boasts and elaborate conceits before and during battle are traces of a very primitive period of warfare. The notion that the heads of clans or agnatic groups (*hamnāfān*),[1] such as Sām, Gōdarz, and Tūs, are the strongest of their clan members, is again reminiscent of archaic periods. The feudal features which prevail in the national history reflect mainly the circumstances of the Parthian and earlier periods. But it is the Sasanian outlook and way of life which are most pervasive in the national history.

Even the Pishdadian and Kayanian periods are treated in a Sasanian way. In fact, the mythical and legendary kings are cast in the mould of Sasanian monarchs. Practically all begin their reign with an address from the throne, as was the custom in Sasanian times. The addresses by Tahmōrath[2] and Jamshēd[3] are typically Sasanian. Equally Sasanian are the congratulatory responses and laudatory remarks by the mōbads and the nobles.[4] In many instances anachronisms and implausible attributions result. The appearance of southern and western localities, like Susa, Babylon, Stakhr, Isfahan and Āzarbāijān in earlier history,[5] is a Sasanian imprint. Afrāsiyāb, for instance, defeats Naudhar's generals in Fārs, where they are said to have taken refuge.[6] Kai Kavād, after defeating Afrāsiyāb, sets out for Stakhr, "which was then the capital".[7] Fasā, in Fārs, was built by Gushtāsp[8] or by Bahman.[9] Kai Kāvūs and Kai Khusrau, seeking God's blessing in order to overcome Afrāsiyāb, visit the Fire of Gushnasf in Āzarbāijān, and set out for Fārs, their "residence" after their victory over Afrāsiyāb.[10] Ibn al-Balkhī's *Fārs-nāma* frequently projects Fārs, the seat of the chief mōbad in Sasanian times,[11] into earlier periods. Stakhr, built by Gayōmard, is the place where the people offer allegiance to Hōshang. Jamshēd chose Stakhr as his capital, and Gushtāsp imprisoned Isfandiyār there.[12]

[1] See A. G. Perikhanian, "Agnaticheskiye gruppy v drevnem Irane", *VDI* 1968.3, pp. 28–53.
[2] Ṭabarī I. 175; Tha'ālibī, 12; Firdausī, 20.
[3] Ṭabarī I. 180; Tha'ālibī, 12; Firdausī, 23.
[4] E.g. the response to Manūchihr's address, *Shāh-nāma*, 130ff.
[5] See above, p. 391.
[6] *Shāh-nāma*, 261ff.
[7] *Ibid.*, 313.
[8] Ḥamza 37; Tha'ālibī, 255.
[9] Ibn al-Balkhī, 54.
[10] Tha'ālibī, 232ff.
[11] Cf. *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* lv. 5.
[12] Ibn al-Balkhī, pp. 26, 27, 32, 51.

Even Lake Čaēčasta, the scene of Afrāsiyāb's final refuge and death was transferred to Āzarbāijān.

Sasanian institutions are reflected everywhere. The Pishdadian kings are advised by the mōbads. When Kai Khusrau decides to retire from the throne, he leaves part of his treasures to be spent on "Building fortifications, inns, fire temples, places of worship, repairing the bridges of wood and bridges of stone, barring the [enemy] observation posts and opening frontier passages . . ."[1] Many Sasanian institutions are attributed to earlier kings. According to the *Shāh-nāma*,[2] it is Jamshēd, for instance, who divides the people into the four classes prevailing in Sasanian times. Ibn al-Balkhī attributes the initiation of the chief Sasanian administrative measures, tax regulations and court protocol to Gushtāsp.[3] Sasanian customs are mirrored in the reforms credited to Kai Kavād,[4] and in the gifts of Kāvūs to Rustam.[5] These gifts include a silver throne with golden pedestals, a diadem and a gold-embroidered hat (*kulāh*). They are reminiscent of Khusrau II's gift of a silver throne to one of his vassal kings, mentioned by Ḥamza.[6] The appearance of Rūm (the Byzantine Empire) in the course of Kayanian history, in such incidents as Kāvūs' dispatching an envoy to the Kaisar,[7] and the young Gushtāsp's journey to Rūm and marriage to a Byzantine princess[8], is an anachronism resulting from the transfer of Sasanian conditions to ancient times.

Some of the episodes in the wars between Iran and Turan appear to be modelled on the battles which took place on the eastern frontiers of Iran during and after the reign of Pērōz. Typical of these engagements are the raids of the "Chionite" Arjāsp on Bactria in the time of Gushtāsp; these are described as having been followed by the sacking of cities, the destruction of fire temples, the killing of the mōbads, and the enslavement of the people.[9]

Nowhere are Sasanian institutions better rendered than in the depiction of the king and his court.

Image of kingship. In the national history the king takes his position at the pinnacle of political power and is presented as the focus of history. A number of doctrines bolster his position. Chief among them are the doctrines of legitimacy and royal prerogative.

[1] Tha'ālibī, 238; cf. Khusrau II's fortification of frontiers in Ḥamza, 57.
[2] P. 24. [3] P. 48. [4] Ṭabarī I. 535. [5] *Op. cit.*, 604.
[6] P. 58. [7] *Shāh-nāma*, 402.
[8] Tha'ālibī, 245ff; *Shāh-nāma*, 1457ff.
[9] Tha'ālibī, 282ff; cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 9.

In order to be legitimate, the king must be of royal blood. In the chain of dynasties, the legitimacy of each king is assured by his blood relationship to a previous king. When there is a gap, such relations are invented. Thus, Hōshang is made a descendant of Gayōmard, Frēdōn a descendant of Jamshēd, Manūchihr a descendant of Ēraj, Zāb a descendant of Naudhar,[1] Kai Kavād a descendant of Manūchihr[2] or Frēdōn,[3] Luhrāsp a descendant of Kai Kavād,[4] Dārā a son of Bahman, the Arsacids descendants of Dārā, Isfandiyār or Kai Kavād[5] and Ardashīr Pāpagān a descendant of Kayanian Dārā. During his flight to the east, Kavād marries a girl of seemingly undistinguished lineage, who later gives birth to a son, Khusrau I. On inquiry, she is found to be a descendant of Frēdōn.[6] Nowhere is the importance of royal blood brought to light more clearly than in the episode of the rebellion of Bahrām Chōbīn against the Sasanian royal house. Although he is of noble birth, his eventual failure is generally explained by the legitimacy of Khusrau II. This doctrine is put in the mouth of Bahrām's own sister and wife, Gurdōya,[7] who warns him of the fate of those who make attempts at kingship without being of royal blood. A similar indictment of rebellion against kings of the blood is voiced by the elder son of Shahrburāz, a general who seized the kingdom of Ardashīr, son of Shīrōy (even though Shahrburāz's younger son takes the opposite view and refuses to consider the Sasanians inviolate).[8]

This doctrine is accompanied by that of the sanctity of royal blood. It is his belief in this sanctity that prevents Burzmihr, whose father Sūkhrā had been killed by Kavād, from killing the former king when he was deposed and placed in Burzmihr's hands.[9] Ḥamza relates[10] that down to his day in Marv and its vicinity people called the descendants of Māhōē, the governor of Marv who betrayed and caused the death of the last Sasanian monarch, "king-killers" (*khudā*[*h*]-*kushān*).[11] Of course there were many cases of internecine dispute among princes of the Sasanian house, and wars of succession were both fierce and frequent. Claims to the throne were not confined to princes of the Sasanian house, as is amply shown by the actions of Bahrām Chōbīn

[1] According to Ṭabarī I. 529. [2] Ṭabarī I. 533.
[3] Firdausī, 293; but cf. *Bundahishn*, xxxv. 28.
[4] Ṭabarī I. 645; Ḥamza, 36. [5] Ṭabarī I. 807ff; Tha'ālibī, 457.
[6] Firdausī, 2297; Tha'ālibī, 593. [7] Firdausī, 2658ff; Tha'ālibī, 683.
[8] Tha'ālibī, 733–4. For a discussion of the sanctity of Iranian kings, see Widengren, "Sacral Kingship", pp. 248ff, and "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", pp. 220ff.
[9] Tha'ālibī, p. 509. [10] P. 63.
[11] On the sanctity of the royal blood, see further Ibn Baṭrīq 176.

and, more graphically, by his arguments as reflected in the romance which fictionalized his story. But these exceptions were either passed over in silence or played down in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, apart from showing the sinister aspect of a king like Shīrōy, who was not favoured by chroniclers sympathetic to Khusrau II. To expatiate on such matters would have bred strife and would not have tallied with the general purpose of a national history. Popular discontent, minority grievances, and rebellious sentiments found scant expression in the national history. The Sasanian Establishment considered the airing of such matters detrimental to the cause of a stable society.

The standard image of a king in the national history presents him as superior among men in physical strength, good looks, wisdom and eloquence – almost the same qualities which distinguish a king in the Homeric conception. Kings are also law-givers and great organizers. This is particularly true of the "great kings" such as the founders of dynasties. All the early kings up to Zāb, who are treated as culture heroes, as well as Kai Kavād and Kai Khusrau share these qualities. Among the Sasanians, Ardashīr, Shāpūr II, and Khusrau I in particular develop such an image. All the great kings are credited not only with military ability and political acumen, but also with superior wisdom. They are not only heroes on the battlefield, but also agents of prosperity, builders of cities, initiators of useful institutions, and needless to say, staunch supporters of the Zoroastrian religion. The early kings are presented as promoters of civilization and authors of progress from a primitive mode of life, when people lived in the mountains and wore animal skins, to a more advanced culture. Most of these monarchs are also credited with precepts and wise counsels.

Of course, this standard image does not mean that we meet with only stereotyped kings in the national history. Although in Iranian histories characterization was broad, with little attention paid to psychological delineation, yet discordant royal images emerge. Opposed to the image of the great kings of benevolent nature is the image of powerful "wicked" kings, exemplified in the tyrants Dahāk and Afrāsiyāb, and originally also Alexander, all treated as kings of "foreign blood". A third type presents a mixed image. Jamshēd constitutes the prototype; he has no match among kings in glory and power, and yet in the end Fortune fails him. Kai Kāvūs is the best-drawn character of this type, combining great power, a spirit of adventure, and indomitable courage with strains of cruelty, foolhardiness and unbridled ambition. Gushtāsp,

too, falls into this category, as do some of the Sasanian kings. One is Kavād, whose military skill and valuable internal reforms are balanced by his ignominious flight into the land of the Hephthalites, his seeking help from former enemies to retrieve his throne, and most importantly, by his succumbing to Mazdakite seduction. Another is Khusrau II, whose military triumphs, dazzling pomp and circumstance, spectacular wealth and splendid court are marred by his suspected acquiescence in the assassination of his father, his flight to Byzantium, the defeat of his army in the final stages of the Perso-Byzantine wars, his harsh treatment of some of his generals, the hardening of his character towards the end of his life, and his inglorious end.

Of the lesser kings, Yazdgird the Sinner is painted black, presumably on account of his resistance to priestly and aristocratic interests, and his sympathy for religious minorities (though this latter quality is passed over in silence in the national history). Shīrōy is presented as a sickly tyrant who puts a large number of Sasanian princes to death, including the father of the last Sasanian king. He is said also to have shown an acrimonious attitude towards his officials.

Although the importance of personal accomplishment (*hunar*) is often emphasized in the course of heroic conceits, it is evident that Iranian society placed great value upon family and descent (*gōhar*). In the course of the long verbal battle between Khusrau II and his rebel general, Bahrām,[1] Khusrau repeatedly taunts Bahrām with his low birth, and asserts the legitimacy of his own claim to the throne on the basis of his royal lineage. Bahrām counters by casting aspersions on the king's birth,[2] and by referring to the forefather of the Sasanians as a mere shepherd,[3] claiming for himself descent from the legendary warriors Ārish and Mīlād.[4] Shīrīn, the beloved mistress and, later, wife of Khusrau II, is rejected by the king's counsellors on the grounds that she would weaken the king's descendants by her plebeian blood.[5] Khusrau I's chief argument against the Mazdakites is that their doctrine would obliterate the distinction between men of high birth and people of humble station.

The king's major occupations are pictured as administering justice, taking counsel with dignitaries at court (notably the chief mōbad, high-ranking nobles, and wise counsellors), deciding matters of peace and war, appointing chief officers of state, and taking appropriate measures

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, 2688–2705. [2] *Ibid.*, 2685. [3] *Ibid.*, 2703.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2697. [5] Tha'ālibī, 692f.

for enhancing the prosperity of the land, as well as cultivating the princely pursuits of hunting, banqueting and merry-making. His education is oriented accordingly. He is tutored at court and in the field to attain physical and intellectual accomplishments.

Though much emphasis is placed on physical skills (handling weapons, riding, playing polo, and hunting), moral discipline, cultural attainments and proper etiquette are not ignored, as can be seen in a passage in the *Shāh-nāma* concerning the education of Siyāvush by Rustam.[1] In another passage,[2] Zāl, whose education as a vassal prince is pictured no differently from that of a crown-prince, is tested at the court by Manūchihr and his nobles. They measure his intelligence by asking him to answer riddles and then give him an opportunity to demonstrate in a tournament his skills in bowmanship. Ḥamza[3] refers to the practice whereby Sasanian kings during their own life-times appointed their crown-princes to be kings of major provinces, so that they might gain experience. In a long discourse, excerpted by Thaʿālibī, Ardāshīr, after appointing his son, Shāpūr I, governor of Khurāsān, instructs him in statecraft and the art of good government. We find a summary of the king's duties in Thaʿālibī,[4] where what was undertaken by the nobles on behalf of Shāpūr II, when he was still a minor, is described.

As one of his first official duties, the newly-crowned king would address a gathering of nobles and court notables. After praising God and thanking Him for bestowing kingship upon him, he would outline his programme, assuring the people of his concern for justice and good government, and indicating his expectation of them as subjects. The assembly of notables would respond to the throne-address, exalting the king and his intentions, and assuring him of loyal service and the obedience of the people. The ceremony was one of impressive pomp and formality. Similarly the king sent messages to inform the provincial governors and high officials of his accession, his call for justice and his expectation of unswerving obedience to the throne. The king's epistle to this effect received a written response.[5]

In the national history, very often the king begins his reign by opening his treasure and making generous gifts of gold, silver, jewels, robes and fabrics, mounts and armour to the nobles and to his army. Sometimes he even remits taxes for the people for one or more years. Although this may not have been done in practice, the image was kept alive. Great victories also are occasions for generosity and gift-giving, as well as

[1] P. 528. [2] P. 211ff. [3] Pp. 50–1. [4] P. 513.
[5] See Thaʿālibī, 485, 487, 555.

cancellation of arrears in taxes.[1] When hardship and famine broke out, again the king might reduce or abolish taxes temporarily. For instance, Pērōz cancelled the land and poll taxes following a protracted drought.[2]

A royal custom often mentioned is the special audience given at the court on the occasion of national festivals and major events, such as a military triumph or the birth of a prince. Such audiences were portrayed as both a sign of the king's hospitality and a means of making him accessible to the people. The custom continued into Islamic times and Niẓām al-Mulk's description of such audiences and his prescriptions of correct procedure for them[3] also have a bearing on Sasanian practice. On festive occasions, the king not only bestowed gifts, but also received them with proper ceremony.[4] Strict protocol was observed at court in seating people before the king according to rank and in the reception of foreign dignitaries.[5]

The splendour of the later Sasanian court at its zenith captured the imagination of the authors of the national history. This splendour, which was expressed in terms of abundant wealth, lavish treasures, ornate palaces, large stables, numerous concubines, slaves and servants, extravagant banquets, drinking bouts and hunting parties, was projected into the courts of the early kings as well. The most spectacular account, however, is that given of the fabled treasures and the pomp and circumstance of the court of Khusrau II.[6] Tha'ālibī dedicates a whole chapter to it,[7] and Firdausī describes it with noticeable relish.[8] Khusrau II, in his apologia to counter the accusations levelled against him by his nobles and by his son, Shīrōy, defends the wealth and the luxury of the court by arguing that they are factors in strengthening the kingdom and enhancing its image.

The nationalistic spirit of Sasanian tradition. An element which pervades Persian historical tradition is a strong sense of nationalism. Already in the Avesta, the description of Airyanəm Vaējah, the original land of the Aryans, reveals the exuberant pride that the Avestan people took in their country.[9] They believed in a "national" farrah (*Airyanəm Xvarənah*, "The Glory of the Aryans"), which was created by Ahura Mazda so

[1] Ṭabarī i. 826, 866, 874. [2] Ṭabarī i. 883. [3] P. 159.
[4] Ibn al-Balkhī, 48.
[5] Tha'ālibī, 665f.; Grignaschi, 103–10; Nuwairī, *Nihāyat al-irab* i (Cairo 1342/1923), 186ff; Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, 159ff; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 218ff.
[6] See Ṭabarī i. 1041f; Ibn al-Balkhī, 103; Ḥamza, 60f; *Mujmal*, 79f.
[7] P. 698ff. [8] Pp. 2877ff, particularly 2891–93.
[9] See particularly the *Vendidād* i. 2, and the Tishtar Yasht, 56.

that the Aryans might conquer the countries beyond Aryan lands and bring prosperity to the mountains and valleys.[1] The distinction between Iranians and non-Iranians is made sharper by contrast with the Turanians.

In the Farvardīn Yasht, 143–4, five nations are mentioned: Aiyria "Aryans or Iranians," Tūirya "Turanians", Sairima, "the race of Sarm", Sāinu and Dāhi. The identities of the last two are uncertain.[2] The first three are said in Sasanian tradition to be the descendants of Ēraj, Tūr and Sarm (Salm), the three sons of Frēdōn. Of the five peoples only Tūirya, the Turanians, beside the Airiya, take an active part in the national epic. They assume the rôle of the ever-present national enemy of the Iranians. The names of the Turanian heroes leave no doubt that the Turanians also were an Aryan people. In post-Avestan traditions they were thought to inhabit the region north of the Oxus, the river separating them from the Iranians. Their presence, and their incessant wars with the Iranians, help to define the latter as a distinct nation, proud of their land and ready to spill their blood in its defence.

The continuation of nomadic invasions on the north-eastern borders in historical times kept the memory of the Turanians alive. After the 6th century, when the Turks, who had been pushed westward by other tribes, became neighbours of Iran and invaded Iranian lands, they were identified with the Turanians. Hence the confusion of the two in Islamic sources, including the *Shāh-nāma*, and the frequent reference to Afrāsiyāb as "king of the Turks". Concern for the safety of the Iranian borders and the continuance of the kingdom finds eloquent expression in the national history and is a unifying element of its epic cycles.

Iranian nationalism exhibits itself also in relations with neighbours other than the Turanians – with Romans and Byzantines, in particular. The Sasanians maintained that they were heirs to a great empire, that of the Kayanians, which Alexander had dismembered and plundered, and which the Arsacids had mismanaged (see above p. 378). The early kings of the dynasty were bent on restoring this empire to its former integrity and greatness. Ardashīr justified his invasions of the western provinces on this basis[3] and Shāpūr II in his high-handed letter to the emperor Constantinus, as quoted by Ammianus Marcellinus (XVII. 5. 5–6), exhibits a corresponding spirit. In the national history the Roman

[1] Yasht 18.1–8. On the national farrah see Bailey, *Zoroast. Problems*, 23.

[2] See Christensen, *Études*, 15–17, and Pourdavoud, Yasna I. 57ff. for a discussion of these names.

[3] Herodian VI. 2.1–2; Dio Cassius LXXX. 4.

and Byzantine emperors are often pictured as tributaries of the Iranian kings. The cause of many wars is given as the failure of neighbouring countries to pay their tribute. The share which the Byzantine emperors paid toward the upkeep of garrisons and fortifications against nomadic inroads on the Caucasian borders is generally termed tribute.[1] The wars on the western frontiers are usually described as crowned with success. Victories are depicted at length with great pride; the setbacks are glossed over for the most part.

A revealing instance of Iranian nationalism is found in the "Letter of Tansar", where the superiority of the country and its institutions is expressed in glowing terms.[2] In the *Shāh-nāma*, the victories of Shāpūr II, Narsē, Bahrām V and Khusrau I over their western rivals are represented in almost the same vein as the glorious triumphs of the Iranians over the Turanians. Accounts of legendary expeditions to India, China and other distant places by kings of renown such as Shāpūr II, Bahrām V and Khusrau I,[3] and of their fabulous achievements, are further instances of proud fantasies, as are the exaggerated descriptions of actual battles, with their numerous elephants and dazzling displays of weaponry. Bahrām V, said to have spoken eleven languages,[4] was the hero who, in disguise, performed fantastic feats in India.[5]

In the same way that noble lineage is considered elevating, "foreign" affiliations are seen as defects. The opponents of Bahrām V's succession object that he has been brought up among the Arabs and does not possess Iranian culture.[6] Hormazd IV is disparaged by his critics on account of his Turkish mother.[7] According to Mas'ūdī, who obviously quotes from a self-satisfied source, Persian kings would marry into other royal families, but would not give their daughters in marriage to them, "since they considered themselves noble, and had long stories about this".[8] Khusrau II taunts Bahrām Chōbīn with being of the same city (Rayy) whose contingent joined the Greek Alexander and caused the collapse of the Kayanian kingdom.[9] "The Letter of Tansar", in a passage obviously designed to flatter nationalistic feelings,[10] asserts that Ardashīr is now determined to focus his entire attention on fighting the Rūmīs, the people of Alexander, in order to avenge Dārā. Mas'ūdī

[1] Ṭabarī I. 965; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 108, n. 2; 250, n. 3; cf. *Nāma-yi Tansar*, 28; trans. Boyce, 53.
[2] Pp. 27–8; tr. Boyce, 52–3.
[3] See for instance Ṭabarī I. 965 and Ḥamza, 58.
[4] Tha'ālibī, 555.
[5] Ṭabarī I. 866f. Cf. the exploits of Gushtāsp in Rūm, Tha'ālibī, 268.
[6] Ṭabarī I. 858.
[7] Dīnawarī, 87; Bal'amī, 1081.
[8] *Murūj* II. 221.
[9] *Shāh-nāma*, 2696.
[10] P. 38.

records a tradition evidently inspired by nationalism when he relates[1] that among the booty which Bahrām Chōbīn seized from the Turkish Khaqan were the treasures that Afrāsiyāb had taken from Siyāvush and those which Arjāsp had captured from Luhrāsp. One of the disgraces Arjāsp inflicted on Iran was his capture of the Iranian national banner, which Isfandiyār succeeded in retrieving.[2]

Such evidence, though much of it is characteristic of epic in general, brings out a significant psychological fact: the Iranians had sustained for long centuries a deep sense of national identity. They felt that they were distinct as a people, and had an inalienable common heritage and a long-standing tradition in their saga which set them apart from other peoples. The lands conquered by the Iranians never became "Iran"; they always remained "non-Iran". In fact, the Sasanians after Shāpūr I took the title "king of Iran and non-Iran" (*Ērān ud anērān*), thus indicating the distinction of Iran as a nation. The wish to impress this distinction on others and to inculcate in Iranians a belief in the merits of purely Iranian virtues contributed to the outlook and tenor of the national history and its rhetoric. In a battle between Bahrām Chōbīn and Khusrau II, in which the latter is aided by the Byzantine army, a mighty Byzantine warrior, who is said to have belittled Bahrām, is later cut in half by a single stroke of Bahrām's sword. Khusrau exclaims in admiration and laughs, despite the fact that the loss is his. This behaviour infuriates the brother of the Byzantine king, who is standing beside Khusrau. But Khusrau explains that "the warrior had thought little of my former general; this is the kind of general who has dared to usurp my kingdom".[3]

Now we may turn to an examination of the origin and development of the various components of the native historical tradition in Iran.

II

MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE NATIONAL HISTORY THEIR ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The oldest extant record of some of the elements which occur in the Iranian myths and legends belongs to the 15th century B.C. These elements are found on a cuneiform tablet excavated at El-Amarna in

[1] *Murūj* II. 213. [2] Ṭabarī I. 678; Ibn al-Balkhī, 52.
[3] The oldest mention of the episode is in Ya'qūbī I. 192.

Egypt, on a document from Boğazköy in Anatolia, and also among Kassite documents.[1] Most important is a Boğazköy document in which the names of four major Indo-Aryan gods, Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Nāsatya, occur. They are invoked as witnesses to a treaty made between the Hittite king Šuppililiuma and a Mitanni prince, Mattiuaz(z)a. Documents which belong to the archives of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) from El-Amarna, and which include his own and his father's correspondence with heads of Syrian and Palestinian city-states and Mitanni kings, preserve a number of the names of these rulers, such as Artatama, Artamania and Artaššumara, the first element of which appears to be the Indo-Iranian *ṛta*. Among the Kassite names, that of Šuriliaš, the sun god, which is almost certain to reflect Ved. Sūrya is particularly striking.

Such records, however, suggest little more than the penetration of early waves of Indo-Aryan people during the 2nd millenuium B.C. into the ancient Near East, people who were absorbed later by the local population.

Aside from Near Eastern archaeological evidence, the earliest references we possess to the figures of national history are found in the Rig Veda and the Avesta. The Avesta, the sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians, is of various dates. The oldest part of it in terms of composition is the Gāthās, the hymns of the prophet himself. These are generally believed to have been composed in the 6th century B.C.,[2] although many scholars have attributed them to an earlier period. T. Burrow has recently argued in favour of dating them back to no later than 1100 B.C.,[3] and M. Boyce has now proposed 1700–1500 B.C. for Zoroaster.[4] A series of Avestan hymns called the Yashts, although later in composition than the Gāthās, preserve much older, pre-Zoroastrian myths and legends. Typical of the material in the Yashts is a hero sacrificing to a divine being and seeking his aid in achieving a specified goal or surmounting a particular difficulty. From these scattered allusions it is clear that the gist of the mythical and legendary history of Iran was already in existence in pre-Avestan times.[5] Although the Avestan references are brief,

[1] See M. Mayrhofer, *Die Indo-Arier in alten Vorderasien* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 13ff, and *Die Arier in vorderen Orient – ein Mythos* (Wien, 1974), pp. 12ff, for details and references.

[2] See Henning, *Zoroaster*, 35ff.

[3] "The Proto-Indoaryans", pp. 136–40.

[4] *Zoroastrians*, pp. 18, 49, 92. Cf. S. Shahbazi, "The 'traditional date of Zoroaster' explained", *BSOAS* XL (1977), pp. 26–35, who challenges the traditional date 258 years before Alexander for Zoroaster and explains it as traceable to the year of Cyrus's conquest of Babylon.

[5] Cf. Spiegel, *Arische Studien*, 111ff, 127; *Erân. Altherth.* I. 485ff, 724ff; Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, §1.

it is easily seen that a chain of events, which corresponds in arrangement and broad outline with the legendary history of Iran to the end of the Kayanian era, as known from Sasanian times, was familiar to the Avestan people.

In the Ābān Yasht, addressed to the goddess of water, Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā (Mid. Pers. Anāhīd, Pers. Nāhīd), a series of kings and notables is mentioned who have sacrificed to the goddess. Hōshang's sacrifice to her is typical:

> To her did Hōshang the Pishdadian offer up a sacrifice on the top of the Harā mountain, with a hundred male stallions, a thousand bulls, and ten thousand sheep.
>
> He asked of her a boon saying: Grant me this, O good, most powerful Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā, that I may strike down two-thirds of the giant demons and of the lustful evildoers.[1]

Those who sacrifice to the goddess include Haošyaŋha (Hōshang), Yima (Jam[shēd]), Aži Dahāka (Aždahāk, Dahāk), Thraētaona (Frēdōn), Kəresāspa (Karshāsp > Garshāsp), Fraŋrasyan (Afrāsiyāb), Kava Usa (Kāvūs), Haosravah (Khusrau), Tusa (Tūs), the sons of Vaēsaka (Vēsa, Afrāsiyāb's uncle), Jāmāspa (Jāmāsp), Ašavazdah (Ashavazd, son of Pūrdhaxšti), Ašavazdah and Thrita, sons of Sāyuzdrī (all three champions of the Zoroastrian faith), Vistauru (Gustahm?), Yōišta (Yōsht > Jōsht, one of the champions of the Zoroastrian faith), the Hvovas (to which Jāmāspa belonged) and the Naotaras (the house of Naudhar, to which Tūs and Gushtāsp belonged), Zarathuštra (Zoroaster), Kavi Vištāspa (Vishtāsp > Gushtāsp), Zairivairi (Zarēr), Arəjataspa (Arjāsp) and Vandarəmaini (*Vandarīman or Andarīmān, Arjāsp's brother).

These figures may be divided into the pre-Zoroastrian and the Zoroastrian, as indeed in the Yasht itself they are separated by an interlude (vv. 85–97) which treats of the descent of the goddess from heaven and the instructions she gave to Zoroaster concerning sacrifice offered to her.

From the fact that the worshippers of Arədvī Sūrā include Dahāk, Afrāsiyāb, the sons of Vēsa, Arjāsp and Andarīmān, all villains of the national history, it is obvious that the adversaries of Iranian heroes were not excluded from appealing to Iranian deities. Indeed, being close rivals of the same origin and background, they had recourse to the same means for success. This is further confirmed by the Zamyād Yasht (Yasht 19), which Darmesteter described as a "short history of Iranian monarchy,

[1] Yasht 5. 21–2.

an abridged *Shāh-nāma*".[1] This Yasht is in part devoted to the praise of the deities, rulers and heroes who possessed the Divine Fortune (*Xvarənah*) and an account of their feats: the xvarənah joined Haošyaŋha, who ruled over men and demons in the seven climes; Taxma Urupa (Tahmōrath), who did likewise and transformed Ahriman into a horse, riding on its back to both ends of the earth; and Yima of good herds, who subdued all the demons and whose realm, before he submitted to the Lie, was free from heat and cold, old age, death and envy. In his kingdom, men and animals, waters and plants, food and drink existed forever. The xvarənah was acquired also by Thraētaona, who seized it when it left Yima for the second time. (It had been caught by the yazad Mithra when it left Yima the first time.) It was seized by Kərəsāspa, the strongest and most valiant among men, who succeeded in performing extraordinary feats; and by all the Kayanian princes from Kavi Kavāta to Kavi Haosravah. The xvarənah was possessed also by the prophet Zarathuštra, by his helper Vištāspa, who fought for righteousness, and finally by the Saošyant (Sōshyant), the triumphant redeemer and renovator of the world at the end of time.

The Farvardīn Yasht (Yasht 13), devoted to the celebration of the fravašis, the immortal spirits of the dead, enumerates in a long register the heroes of the faith from the beginning of the world to the end of time. The list includes the name of deities, mythical and legendary figures of the national history, the helpers of Zoroaster in the wars against the infidel, and a large number of names which are not met in other sources. The first part of the Yasht is dedicated to the glorification of the fravašis in general. The second part contains the names of those whose fravašis are specifically invoked. In this part, which may be divided into several sections, are mentioned a number of divine beings, Gayō.marətan (Gayōmard) and Zoroaster (vv. 85–95), the disciples and helpers of Zoroaster and the heroes of the Gushtaspian cycles (vv. 96–110), the Sōshyant (v. 129), and the pre-Zoroastrian heroes (vv. 130–38). It also mentions the names of the Zoroastrian righteous women (vv. 130–8) and other righteous persons whose identities are lost to us, but who obviously have to do with the history of the early Zoroastrian church (vv. 118–28).

Of the fravašis of pre-Zoroastrian heroes, those of Yima, the house of Thraētaona, Uzava (Zāb), Aghraēratha (Aghrērath), Manuščithra, the Kayanian princes (exactly as recorded in Yasht 19), Kərəsāspa,

[1] *The Zend-Avesta* II. 286.

Haošyaŋha, and Fradhaxšti (one of the Immortals) are invoked. Of the fravašis of the helpers of Zoroaster, those of several members of his family and a great number of his early disciples are commemorated. There is mention also of a large number of heroes who obviously belong to the Gushtaspian saga, but of whom only a few are known from Islamic sources. This roster attests to an originally far more extensive epic cycle of the holy Zoroastrian wars than is revealed by extant Middle Persian and Islamic writings. Among the heroes who are known in these writings are Vištāspa, Zairivairi, Vistauru of the house of Nautara, Frašamvarəta (Farshīdvard, son of Gushtāsp in Firdausī), Frašō.karəta (Frashōkard, a son of Gushtāsp in the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*), Spənto.dāta (Isfandiyār), Bastavairi (Bastūr) and Kavārasman (Karazm).

Scattered references to figures of the national history are found also in Yashts 9, 15 and 17, as well as in the *Aogemadaēčā*, a later text in Avestan. There was more information on these figures in the Sasanian Avesta than we possess now. The *Chihrdād Nask*, a section of the Avesta which is now lost but is summarized in the *Dēnkard* (VIII. 12), contained a more systematic account of the national heroes than other Avestan books. Its summary lists the names of all the Pishdadian and Kayanian kings in the same order in which they appear in Islamic sources.

The *Dāmdād Nask*, another lost book of the Avesta, dealt with the creation of the spiritual and the corporeal world, the attack of the Evil Spirit and the pollutions and plagues with which it infested our world, and the disposition of mankind and its resources against the Adversary, much as the *Bundahishn* does; for the *Dāmdād Nask* is evidently the chief source of the *Bundahishn*.[1] The summary of the lost *Sūdgar Nask* in the *Dēnkard* IV furnishes a good deal of information about the heroes of the national history, Zoroaster, the Sōshyant and the Renovation of the world.

Not only are the major figures of the mythical and legendary history found in the Avesta, but even some of the minor figures and episodes are recorded. For instance, reference is made in the Avesta to the two wives of Dahāk: Saŋhavak and Arənavak (Shahrnāz and Arnavāz in Firdausī), whom Frēdōn sought to possess through sacrifice to several deities.[2] Or again, Dahāk's minister Kandrau is presented in the Avesta as a giant monster, Gandarəva, who is killed by Kərəsāspa.[3] Thus the

[1] See West, *Pahlavi Texts* IV, 13–14.

[2] Yasht 9. 13–14; 15. 23; 17. 33–5. See p. 372.

[3] Yasht 5. 37. See F. Spiegel, *Die traditionelle Literatur der Parsen* (Vienna, 1860), 339; West, *Pahlavi Texts* II, 374–6.

Sasanian tradition of Iranian ancient history shows itself to be a direct development of the traditions recorded by the Avestan people.

Before turning to the general features of this development, we may examine the chief individual figures, following the sequence in which they appeared in the *Khwadāy-nāmag.*

GAYŌMARD AND THE BEGINNING OF THE HUMAN RACE

Gayōmard (Av. Gayō.marətan "dying life"; Pers. Kayūmarth) appears in the Avesta several times, though little information about him is given. From Yasht 13.145 and Yasna 26.10, in which the fravašis of the just "from Gayō.marətan to the Saošyant" are celebrated, we infer that the notion of Gayōmard as the first man is at least as old as the Avesta. This is reinforced by another passage, Yasht 13.87, which says that Gayōmard was the first to give ear to the teaching of the good religion and from him Ahura Mazda formed the race of the Aryan nation. From the *Dēnkard* VIII. 12. 1–4, we learn that the *Chihrdād Nask* of the Sasanian Avesta began with an account of Gayōmard and the first human couple, and the summary of yet another lost nask, the *Vashtmānsar Nask*, in the *Dēnkard* IX. 32. 9–10, contains allusions to the much fuller account which is preserved in the *Bundahishn*. According to the Pahlavī books which reflect later Avestan passages,[1] Gayōmard received fatal wounds when the Evil Spirit attacked him. Ohrmazd then created Sleep in the form of a fifteen-year-old youth in order to relieve Gayōmard's pain. Ohrmazd also granted him thirty years to live (the same number of years which appear in post-Sasanian sources as his regnal years). But Gayōmard decreed before his death that from his seed men should come forth and carry out Ohrmazd's design. From Gayōmard's seed, according to the *Bundahishn* xiv, sprang a rhubarb plant, which grew slowly into the first human couple, Mashya and Mashyāna.[2] At first the couple acknowledged their creation by Ohrmazd, but Ahriman corrupted their minds and they offered allegiance to him. They turned from eating grass to drinking milk and then to eating meat. This way of life strengthened the demons. For fifty years the demons made the couple lose their desire for intercourse and they remained childless. Then thoughts of progeny excited desire in them and they conceived a pair of children, which they later devoured. Eventually, they conceived six sets of twins,

[1] *Bundahishn* vi F; *Mēnōg ī Khrad* xxvii, 14; *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* lxiv. 1–3; *Zādsparam*, x. 2.

[2] See p. 370, and below, p. 420.

each with one male and one female. In one set of twins were Siyāmak and Vasāk. From them were born Fravāk and Fravākēn. They, in turn, had fifteen sets of twins, and each set became the parents of a race.

A number of other myths attached to the figure of Gayōmard can be gathered from the Pahlavī books. While some may be late or derivative, others appear to be pre-Zoroastrian. According to the Pahlavi *Rivāyat* 16 B.1,[1] the creation of Gayōmard is one of the occasions on which Ohrmazd offers a sacrifice (*myazd*). The *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* lxiv. 3 recounts a myth obviously based on priestly speculations: Ohrmazd fashions from the Infinite Light the body of a priest (*asrōk karp*) whose name is to be that of Ohrmazd. Inside this body he creates a tangible (*gētīg*) being called man. For 3,000 years the man does not move or speak or eat. He is the first to receive the good religion, and men inherit wisdom from him.[2] He is the first of the three "just men" (*mard ī ahrāv*)[3] – the other two are Zoroaster and the Sōshyant – and his status as a "just man" is described as "above the stars, the Moon, the Sun and the Fire of Ohrmazd".[4] At the resurrection the bones of Gayōmard will rise first, then those of Mashya and Mashyāna, and then those of other men.[5] Half the light which accompanies the sun will be given to Gayōmard and the other half to the rest of mankind (*Bundahishn* xxxiv. 8). According to the *Dēnkard* III. 80. 3–4, Gayōmard was born of the union between Ohrmazd and his daughter Spandārmad (the Earth). This union is the origin of *khwēdōdah* (Av. *xvaētvadatha*), the marriage with close relatives. (In another passage,[6] however, Vahman is said to be the issue of this marriage.)

The *Bundahishn* (i a. 13) describes Gayōmard as "bright as the sun", and the same in height and width – four reeds of measured length. He was stationed on the left bank of the river Dāitī at the middle of the earth, facing the primordial Bull (*Gāv ī ēvdād*) on the right bank.

The *Mēnōg ī Khrad* tells us,[7] as does Bīrūnī,[8] that Gayōmard killed a son of Ahriman, Arzūr.[9] Ahriman, according to Bīrūnī, complains to

[1] Tr. Molé, *Culte*, 126.

[2] Cf. *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, 23.10 in Molé, *Culte*, 446; cf. Jaihānī quoted by J. de Menasce, "Le temoignage de Jayhānī sur le mazdéisme" in E. Gren *et al.* (eds), *Donum Natalicium H. S. Nyberg Oblatum* (Uppsala, 1954), 52.

[3] For a description of the *mard ī ahrāv* and his virtues and functions, see Molé, *Culte*, 273ff.

[4] *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* II. 10 in Molé, *Culte*, 473–4.

[5] *Bundahishn* xxxiv. 6; cf. Bailey, *Zoroast. Prob.*, 94.

[6] IX. 38. 4–6.

[7] xxv. 14–15.

[8] *Āthār*, 100.

[9] Bīrūnī has *Kharūra*; Av. *Arəzura*. See Christensen, *Les types du premier homme* I. 53–4, for a discussion of the name.

Ohrmazd, protesting a breach of compact. Ohrmazd, as a result, punishes Gayōmard by death, which in the more orthodox accounts is dealt him by Ahriman.

These scattered pieces of information have given rise to considerable speculation among Iranists as to the original nature and rôle of Gayōmard. He has been seen as one of the primordial giants of Indo-European myth, from whose limbs the world was made;[1] he has been practically identified with Mithra;[2] made a brother of Mithra and a son of Ahura Mazda;[3] identified with the Sōshyant;[4] and regarded as a microcosm representing the macrocosm.[5]

His name suggests that from early Zoroastrian times Gayōmard was the personification of an abstract notion, as were many other notions, notably *aša* (*ṛta*) and the Aməša Spəntas, also thus personified. But even so, the myth obviously contains many aspects of more ancient beliefs concerning a prototype of man at the beginning of creation. A comparison with the Vedic Mārtāṇda "Mortal Seed",[6] who, like Gayōmard, is as wide as he is tall, and from whose "seed" all human life was to spring, leaves little doubt about the Indo-Iranian basis of Gayōmard's myth.[7] It is probable that in the more ancient myth of pagan times, it is the first man himself who is sacrificed by the gods in order to reinforce life and generate new births. The notion is obliquely expressed in the myth of the primordial Bull, whose death brings animals and plants into being,[8] and can perhaps be seen also in the Mithraic sacrifice of the bull. In the orthodox Zoroastrian version of the myth, however, we find Ahriman to be the author of the Bull's death.[9]

It is clear that in the early Zoroastrian account, Gayōmard, like the Indic Mārtāṇda, shared some mythical features with the gods. He is placed on a level with the prophet Zoroaster and the saviour Sōshyant as a member of a trinity of "just men", and has a link with the sun, since his seed is said to have been purified by it, and since, like it, he shone. Further, he is to play an eschatological rôle by rising first among the

[1] Christensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 33ff.

[2] S. Hartmann, *Gayōmart* (Uppsala, 1953), reviewed by M. Boyce, *BSOAS* XVII. 174ff; see Gershevitch, *Avestan Hymn* 69, for a refutation of this view.

[3] R. C. Zaehner, "Postscript to *Zurvān*", *BSOAS* XVII. 244.

[4] See Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 283–4 for references.

[5] See Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancien*, 210ff, 325ff, and *contra* Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 140, n. 79.

[6] K. Hoffman, 'Mārtāṇḍa und Gayōmart', *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* XI (Munich, 1957), 85–103; H. W. Bailey in Hinnells (ed.), *Mithraic Studies* I. 16.

[7] Boyce, *Hist. Zorast.* I. 138.

[8] See above, p. 353.

[9] See Gershevitch, *Hymn to Mithra*, 64–6 for a discussion of the point.

dead, a feature reminiscent of the Vedic Yama (Av. Yima). The eclipse of Yima as the original first man seems to have led to the transference of many of his features to Gayōmard. Later, Gayōmard became the subject of priestly speculation. Shahristānī mentions a Zoroastrian sect which even took Gayōmard's name.[1] When the national history was systematized, Gayōmard acquired an added dimension: he became the first world-king. Popular imagination added details, particularly, it seems, concerning his struggle with Ahriman. Balʿamī[2] devotes an unusually long passage to Gayōmard's revenge on Ahriman for having killed his son.[3]

The accounts of Islamic writers throw some light on how the myths of Gayōmard and the first couple were presented in Sasanian historical tradition. Our most revealing source is Ḥamza;[4] he tells us that he came across material which was included in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, but which had been omitted by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm, and he then delivers an account which conforms to that of Pahlavī sources, notably the *Bundahishn* (i a and xiv). Although Ḥamza says in a later passage that he has taken his information from some commentary on the Avesta, this statement does not change the validity of his account as a rendering of the Sasanian form of the myth. In its basic form, this account is echoed also in Balʿamī[5] and Bīrūnī.[6] In another short account by Ḥamza[7] taken from the Mōbad Bahrām ibn Mardānshāh, who according to Ḥamza had compared twenty manuscripts of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, we find the legend somewhat subdued. Here Gayōmard is the first man and rules for 30 years; Mashya and Mashyāna are his progeny, who, though sterile for seventy years, eventually produce eighteen children in the course of fifty years. The rôle of Gayōmard in the struggle between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, and mention of the Bull and the rhubarb plant, are omitted. It is obvious that in Bahrām's version all

[1] *al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. Cureton, 182; see Schraeder, *Studien*, 238 for a discussion of the point.

[2] *Tārīkh-i Balʿamī*, pp. 114ff. Cf. G. Lazard, "Un texte persan sur la légende de Gayōmart", *JA* 1956, pp. 201ff.

[3] I find little justification for interpreting as "Gayōmard" a grotesque anthropomorphic figure (Phyllis Ackerman, *SPA*, p. 799) which occurs on Sasanian seals and which is often surrounded by some animal figures, such as a dog, a cock, a scorpion, snakes, etc; cf. Bivar, *Western Asiatic Seals*, p. 26; C. Brunner, in R. N. Frye (ed.), *Catalog of Sasanian Stamp Seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pp. 68ff. The figures most probably have an astrological basis, but the passages in the *Bundahishn* and *Zātsparam* relating to the contaminated world to which Gayōmard awakens after he recovers from the initial shock of his injuries can hardly explain the various details of such seals. Ackerman's interpretation remains highly speculative.

[4] P. 64.

[5] P. 113.

[6] P. 103.

[7] P. 24.

aspects of the legend which could have offended Muslim sensibilities are eliminated. But such omissions and modifications must be traced to Ibn al Muqaffaʿ and other early translators, who had left out what could not be easily understood by their readers. Other accounts by Islamic writers often combine elements of the original myth with later additions or distortions through Biblical or Islamic influences.

The standard form of the later versions deriving from the translations of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* is the one which we find in Firdausī. Callling Gayōmard the first king may be due to assignment to him of a position of supremacy in the more ancient accounts. Already in the *Aogemadaēčā*, 85–7, he is called king of the world, with the appellation *Gar-shāh* "king of the mountains", later often mistaken (even in *Dēnkard* II. 35.2) for *Gil-shāh* "king of clay", possibly under the influence of the Biblical myths of creation[1] and a misreading of Pahlavī *r* for *l*, both of which have the same shape in cursive writing.

THE PISHDADIAN DYNASTY

Hōshang. Among the kings and heroes who, according to the Yashts, sacrifice to deities Hōshang generally stands first,[2] giving the impression that, when the Yashts were composed, he was considered the first king who ruled over the world. He is called *paradhāta* "created first", (Pers. *pīshdād*). In the summary of the *Chihrdād Nask* in the *Dēnkard* VIII. 13. 5–6, Hōshang is said to have founded the monarchy (*dahyupadēh*), while Vēgard, who is called his brother in this work and some later sources, is credited with the institution of the landed nobility (*dēhkānīh*; in Bīrūnī, 220, *al-dahqana*). Hōshang's title was later interpreted as to mean the one who first gave law or rendered justice (*dād*).[3] From his Avestan title, *paradhāta*, we may surmise that he was once considered in some local myths to be the first man and that later the myth was absorbed by the Avestan tradition. Some references to him in later sources as the parent of the Iranian race strengthen this impression (see below). It is to be noted that he does not have a counterpart in Indian mythology and therefore must be regarded as an Iranian figure. He appears to be connected with the territories of Māzandarān and Varəna,[4] since it is

[1] Christensen, *Les types du premier homme* I. 45 n.3, 85, 91.
[2] Yasht 5. 21–3; 9. 3–5; 15. 7–13; 17. 24–6; 19. 25–0.
[3] Ṭabarī I. 171; Ḥamza, 29; Maqdisī III. 139.
[4] Varəna was identified by W. B. Henning as Skt. Varnu, north of Peshawar; *BSOAS* XII (1947), pp. 52–3. For Māzandarān see below, p. 446.

particularly the demons, sorcerers and evil creatures of those regions that he subdues and rules. This association may reflect a memory of some hard-won conquests there by victorious Iranian invaders.

The gap between Gayōmard and Hōshang was filled with a series of generations which begot the human races. When Gayōmard came to be accounted the first king, the period between him and Hōshang was given as an interregnum. Firdausī ignores the interregnum and makes Hōshang a grandson of Gayōmard and his cherished adviser (*dastūr*), who avenges the death of his father Siyāmak at the hand of Ahriman by killing Ahriman's son in battle. This story seems to be a reversal or modification of the Arzūr myth referred to earlier.[1] The majority of other sources, including the *Bundahishn*,[2] Ṭabarī[3] and Mas'ūdī,[4] place three generations between Gayōmard and Hōshang, namely Mashya, Siyāmak and Fravāk. The name of the female member of each pair, that is the wife/sister, appears to have been originally a feminine form of the name of the male counterpart, and although the forms recorded in Middle Persian and Perso-Arab sources are often corrupt, this pattern can be seen in the name of Mashyāna and its variants,[5] and in other forms, such as Siyāmī[6] and Fravākēn.[7] The ancient Yima-Yimī (Ved. Yama-Yamī) is the oldest instance of such pairs.

The fact that some Islamic works reflecting the late Sasanian writings mention Hōshang, rather than Gayōmard, as the first king reveals the ambiguity of the Sasanian views regarding the first king.[8] On the other hand, according to Firdausī and a number of other sources[9] Hōshang is Gayōmard's successor on the throne. The difference probably originates in the discrepancy between regional traditions.[10] Pahlavi and Islamic sources do not add much to what one gains from the surviving Avesta itself and from the *Dēnkard* summaries of its missing portions, but they expatiate on the excellence of Hōshang, his wisdom and justice, and his civilizing endeavours. Whereas the civilizing activities of Hōshang were emphasized in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, it is his battle against the dēvs and his appeals for divine assistance which are stressed in the Yashts. Hōshang's discovery of fire, cited by Firdausī, is obviously a rather late and popular account, which could not have originated in priestly circles, and since it is not compatible with Avestan cosmology, it must refer to the discovery of the way of "making" a fire.

[1] P. 418. [2] xiv. 31–9. [3] I. 154. [4] *Murūj* II. 110.
[5] All collected by Christensen in *Les types du premier homme* I. 9–10.
[6] Ṭabarī I. 154. [7] *Bundahishn* xiv. 34.
[8] Ṭabarī I. 154; Ḥamza, 13, 29; Bīrūnī, 103, 220–1. [9] See above.
[10] Cf. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 35ff.

Tahmōrath. Like Hōshang, Tahmōrath is not known in Indian mythology, but his appearance in the Yashts[1] assures the antiquity of his myth. According to a tradition quoted by Bīrūnī[2] it was Gayōmard, not Tahmōrath, who rode on Ahriman – an instance of floating motifs in Iranian myths and legends.[3] The demons' revelation of the art of writing to Tahmōrath, a story mentioned in both Pahlavi and Islamic sources,[4] probably preserved the memory of the acquisition of writing by Iranian tribes from the former inhabitants of Iran.

In some Islamic sources,[5] Tahmōrath has been called the first king, possibly owing to a divergent view in original Sasanian writings. The fact that on occasion an entire millennium has been given as his life-span[6] also seems to indicate a position of high importance in some of the early accounts of him. This is further confirmed by the appearance of his name in the Mandean Book of Kings, *Sidra Rabbā*, immediately after Gayōmard, with a reign of 600 years.[7]

Christensen has advanced a theory[8] according to which both Hōshang and Tahmōrath have been adopted into Iranian legends from the Scythians. This theory is chiefly based on the name Arpoxais, which occurs in Herodotus IV. 5, as that of a son of the first man. Christensen derives the first part of the name from *Ɜrəpə, which he sees in Avestan *Urupa*. Whatever the case may be, the placing of Hōshang and Tahmōrath between Gayōmard and Yima, the original first man, demands an explanation. Probably here we are dealing with the first kings or first men who belonged to the myth cycles of different Iranian tribes, myths which were assimilated by the Avestan people in pre-Zoroastrian times.

Jamshēd. Jamshēd (Av. Yima.xšaēta), who has been the subject of extensive research and speculation among scholars, is common to both Indian and Iranian mythology. He is the only one of the Iranian "kings" who is mentioned in the Gāthās (see below.)

It is not possible, of course, to determine just when in history the various transformations in the myth of Jamshēd took place. In Sasanian times he emerges as a wise and powerful "king" who succeeded his brother Tahmōrath to the throne. As an ideal king and law-giver, he is credited with many wise acts and institutions. He is said to have brought

[1] 15. 11; 19. 27–9; 23. 2. [2] P. 99. [3] See p. 401 above for other instances.
[4] *Mēnōg i Khrad* xxvii. 23; *Aogemadaēčā*, 92; Ṭabarī I. 175; Bal'amī, 129; Tha'ālibī, 9; Firdausī, 22. [5] Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* III. 252; Yāqūt I. 417–18.
[6] Ibn Qutaiba, *Ma'ārif*, 652; Tha'ālibī, 10; cf. Maqdisī III. 139–40, who mentions both 30 and 1030 years. [7] Christensen, *Les types du premier homme* I. 192.
[8] *Ibid.* 136ff.

people back to moderation (*padmān*).[1] The farrah enables him to ward off death from his subjects, who live lives of total bliss. But then he is carried away by his successes and claims divine power. Subsequently, the farrah departs from him.

In the Gāthās, in a unique passage,[2] he is counted among sinners and is said (according to some translations) to be the first to have given men pieces of meat to eat. Much has been made of this passage in a reconstruction of pre-Zoroastrian *daēva*-worship, the blood-sacrifice among pagan Iranians, and the nature of the prophet's reform. But the passage is far from clear and is variously rendered by different scholars.[3] It can hardly be inferred from it, therefore, that Yima's sin was the institution of blood-sacrifice, as was held previously, since there is no evidence that the prophet prohibited this custom. Animal sacrifice has always featured among Zoroastrian rites.[4]

In the post-Gāthic Avesta, however, Yima is restored to the position of pre-eminence which he must have enjoyed in pagan times. Yasna 9. 3–5 tells us that as a reward for being the first to press the sacred plant *haoma*, Vivaŋhvant was given Yima as a son. In the Yashts we read of Jamshēd's sacrificing the stereotyped number of animals – a hundred stallions, a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep – to various deities including Arədvi Sūrā, Drvāspā, Vāyū and Xvarənah. He asks for sovereignty over men in all the world and the power to subdue demons and to bring well-being and immortality to men and animals, and these petitions are granted.[5] His regular epithets are two: one is *xšaēta* (Mid. Pers. *-shēd*) "prince, king" which may derive from an earlier meaning, "brilliant, glowing"[6] (cf. Av. *hvarə.xšaēta*, Mid. Pers. *xwaršēd* "glowing sun, the sun"); the other is *hvathva* (Mid. Pers. translation *hū-ramak*) "possessor of good herds".

In the second chapter of the *Vidēvdād*, cosmological and eschatological rôles are assigned to Yima. He is the first to receive the guardianship of the world from Ahura Mazda. He reigns over a world free from death, pain and corruption. Three times, magically, he enlarges the extent of the earth in order to accommodate the increasing number of men, animals and other creatures. He rules for 1,000 years before Ahura

[1] *Dēnkard* III, tr. de Menasce, no. 286. [2] Yasna 32. 8.
[3] See Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 93, n. 55 for the literature; Insler, *Gāthās*, 47, 196.
[4] Boyce, *ibid.*
[5] Yashts 5.25–7; 9.8–11; 15.15–17; 17.28–31; 19.30–8, 45–6.
[6] See Benveniste, *Les titres et noms propres*, 21–2, for a discussion of this word and its meanings. Cf. Bartholomae, 541, and W. Belardi, "Axš-aina, axša-ina or a-xšai-na?", *AION* III (1961), 24ff.

Mazda warns him in an assembly of the gods and best of men that winters with destructive snowstorms and frost will descend upon the visible world. He is instructed by Ahura Mazda to build a subterranean fortress (the Var), and to bring into it pairs of the finest men and women, animals and the seeds of all the best plants and fruits, so that when all the other creatures of the earth are destroyed by the snowstorm, the inhabitants of the Var may survive.[1] The summaries of the lost nasks of the Avesta given in the *Dēnkard* VIII and IX do not add any new information of substance to what can be gleaned from the extant Avesta.

There can be little doubt that Yima was originally conceived as the first man among the Indo-Iranians. Traces of this concept survive in Yasht 13. 130, where Yima is mentioned at the head of a list of kings and heroes whose fravašis are venerated; confirmation exists in Vedic mythology, which identifies Yama as the first man.[2] Among both peoples, as is to be expected, the first man is made immortal[3] and elevated almost to the rank of the gods.[4] In Iran, as the first man Yima also becomes the first ruler, reigning over a paradise free from need, death and disease. In India, as the man who dies first and therefore goes first to the realm of the departed, Yama becomes king of the dead and receiver of departed souls.[5] In India, Yama also has a sinister aspect and is practically identified with the dread figure of death itself. His messengers carry off the doomed to his kingdom beneath the earth, the entrance to which is guarded by his two vigilant dogs. In Iran, also, it seems that Yima's abode was originally imagined to be a subterranean one.[6] His Var was to be built underground, and possibly it is to Yima that Herodotus VII. 114 refers when he mentions an underworld god propitiated by the Persians. In the Avesta Yima is the first to press *haoma* for sacrifice, whereas in the Vedas he is the one who procures fire for men.

As is sometimes the case with primitive gods, primitive heroes tend to fade in time, or be transformed in popular beliefs, surrendering their places to other figures more recently adopted. In India, Yama's attributes as the first man, and therefore the father of humanity, are transferred to Manu.[7] In Iran, the Zoroastrian reform obviously changed the

[1] For probable influence of the Semitic legend of the deluge and Noah's Ark on the development of Yima's legend of the Var see Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* II. 476ff, and Boyce, *Hist. Zorast.* I. 95.

[2] *Rig-Veda* x. 17.1–2.

[3] *Rig-Veda* I. 83.5; IX. 113.8; cf. *Mēnōg i Khrad* viii. 27.

[4] *Rig-Veda* x. 14.7, 9; cf. *Atharva-Veda* XVIII. 2.3.

[5] *Rig-Veda* x. 14.1–7, 10–12; 135.1–2.

[6] See Lommel, *Yäšt's*, 200ff.

[7] See Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Vedas*, 281.

pagan notion of Yima. It presumably assigned the underworld to be his kingdom. Eventually, when the older beliefs were adopted into the Zoroastrianism of the Yashts, Yima emerged as the ruler of a golden age. The features of Yima as the first man were transferred partly to Gayōmard, including his affinity with the sun,[1] and partly to Mashya and Mashyāna, who may be viewed as a reinterpretation of the original couple, Yima and Yimī. Some of Yima's aspects as the agent of death seem to have been taken over by Vayu, and by Astō-vidhātū, demon of death.[2] Yima is then assigned the rôle of the first king, a function transferred later to Hōshang and eventually to Gayōmard. Yima presiding over the golden age of man loses none of his splendour, remaining a colourful and potent figure in both priestly writings and popular imagination.

There is yet another aspect to the power and piety of Yima in Iranian tradition, namely his fall from grace. In the Avesta this is expressed by the departure of the xvarənah from him as a result of his submission to the Lie.[3] The xvarənah departs from him three times in the form of a visible bird and is seized in turn by Mithra, Frēdōn and Karshāsp (apparently those who helped defeat Dahāk), whereas Aži Dahāka fails in his attempt to seize it. The sin attributed to Jamshēd in the Pahlavī books is not made entirely clear in the Avesta, which merely notes his temptation by the dēvs and his submission to the Lie. Pahlavī books and Islamic sources elaborate on his sins of lying, pride, ingratitude towards God and his claim of divinity.

Beyond being a common motif in many myths concerned with a golden age followed by a decline, the myth of Yima's fall may have been influenced primarily by Zoroaster's apparent disapproval of him and also by Semitic myths of the fall of man. The myth of his riding in the sky drawn by demons, which is found also among the episodes of Kāvūs's reign, may have been evolved to express both his might and a prelude to his fall. It also offers an explanation for the advent of Aži Dahāka, whose reign begins immediately after that of Jamshēd, ushering in the second millennium of world history.

Jamshēd's identification with King Solomon in popular belief is of course a product of Islamic times. As a figure who has captured the imagination of the people, he has attracted to himself a number of legendary and folkloristic motifs, such as possession of a magic cup

[1] Yashts 9.4; 15.16. [2] Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 92. [3] Yasht 19.33–8.

(*jām-i Jam* "Jam's cup"), a magic ring (*nigīn-i Jam*) and an all-revealing mirror (*āyīna-yi Jam*).

Dahāk (Av. *Aži dahāka*, Perso-Arab. Ḍaḥḥāk). Dahāk appears in the Avesta as a "three-headed, three-mouthed and six-eyed" monster; he is chief among the demons whom Ahriman created for the destruction of the world.[1] Probably Dahāk's myth incorporates the notion of a natural phenomenon, destructive drought. In Yasht 5.29–31 he is said to have sacrificed unsuccessfully to Arədvī Sūrā in order to obtain the power to destroy the race of men in the seven climes (lit. to make them *amašya* "without men"). Equally unsuccessful was his attempt to seize the divine xvarənah on behalf of Aŋgra Mainyu (Ahriman) in a contest between the latter and Spənta Mainyu "the Bounteous Spirit".[2] His sacrifice to Arədvī Sūrā takes place in Bawri, which in the Pahlavī literature is generally rendered as Babylon, but which, in view of the antiquity of the myth, must originally have been associated with an eastern Iranian location.[3] A trace of his eastern origin may be seen in a tradition preserved in the *Shāh-nāma*, according to which the house of Mihrāb in Kabul descended from Dahāk. His association with Babylon can have taken place only when the eastern Iranian people came into contact with Mesopotamia.

In later times Arabia, associated with marauding bands and noted for its arid wastes, took the place of Babylon and Dahāk was called Tāzī, "Arab". Although the transfer is likely to have taken place after the Muslim invasion as an expression of anti-Arab feeling, an earlier replacement, prompted by the Arab raids in Sasanian times, notably during the reigns of Shāpūr II (4th century) and Hormazd IV (6th century) cannot be ruled out. In the evolution of Iranian myths, Dahāk takes his place among the figures of national history as a tyrant who overthrows Jamshēd and rules the world as an agent of Evil for a thousand years. In the religious tradition of the Pahlavī books, Dahāk is an arch-demon and a sorcerer, who defeats the glorious Jamshēd and continues to bring destruction to the world until he is smitten by Frēdōn, who restores order and justice. Imprisoned in Mount Demavand, the tyrant will finally be destroyed in the last millennium by Karshāsp.[4] In the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, where he was personified as a tyrant

[1] Yasna 9.8; Yasht 14.40. [2] Yasht 19.45–52.

[3] Cf. Nyberg, 292, 465, who translates it as "beaver-land"; Christensen, *Démonologie*, 21, n.1; and Burrow, "Proto-Indoaryans", p. 138, n.30.

[4] *Bundahishn* xxix. 9; xxxiii. 36; *Dādastān i Dēnig* xxxvii. 97; *Zand i Vahman Yasht* IX. 22.

and king, he was also provided with a genealogy and made a descendant of Tāz, son of Fravāk, son of Siyāmak.[1] The *Bundahishn* makes his mother a descendant of Ahriman, eight generations removed. A relic of his serpentine form is found in the two snakes which grow on his shoulders. According to Firdausī, his destructive acts against mankind were mainly the result of the snakes' need to feed on human brains. The *Shāh-nāma's* detailed account of Dahāk seems to incorporate also a good many popular stories, some of which, such as the story of his parricide, must be of late origin.

Frēdōn (Av. Thraētaona; Pers. Firēdūn). Frēdōn belongs to Indo-Iranian myth and is related to the Vedic figure Trita. His father Āthwya (Ved. Āptya, Mid. Pers. Asbiān, Pers. Ābtīn) was, according to Yasht 9. 6–8, the second to press the haoma plant and in reward was given Thraētaona as a son. The Vedas also know a Trita Āptya who, like Frēdōn, slays a demon Viśvarūpa, which resembles Aži Dahāka in that it also is serpent-bodied, three-headed and six-eyed.[2] The chief achievement of Frēdōn is the overwhelming of Dahāk. Frēdōn sacrifices to a number of deities and asks for victory over Dahāk. The following passage[3] addressed to the yazad of reward, Aši, is typical:

> To her did Thraētaona, the heir to the valiant house of Āthwya, offer up a sacrifice in the four-cornered Varəna. He begged of her a boon, saying: "Grant me this favour, O great and good Aši, that I may overcome Aži Dahāka, the three-mouthed, the three-headed, the six-eyed, with a thousand ruses, that most powerful, fiendish demon, wicked, who deceives the world, the strongest demon that Aŋgra Mainyu created against the visible world, to destroy the world of truth; and that I may carry away his two beloved Saŋhavak and Arənavak, who are the fairest of body for fecundity, and the most wonderful for the household.[4]

Here we may take note of the motif in Iranian myths and legends of the killing of a dragon or serpent by a hero. The theme is common to most mythologies. Zeus and Typhon, Marduk and Tiamat, Gilgamesh and Khumbaba, Apollo and Python, Herakles and the Hydra, Thor and Jörmungand are some of the better known examples. In Vedic India the theme is represented by Indras' killing of the serpent (Ved. *ahi*, Av.

[1] *Bundahishn* xxxv. 7; Ṭabarī I. 202–3; Ḥamza, 31–2.
[2] See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 160.
[3] Yasht 17.33–4.
[4] Cf. Yashts 5.34; 9.143; 15.24.

aẓi) Vṛtra and Trita's slaying of Viśvarupa. In Iran the primal instances are afforded by Thraētaona and Aži Dahāka, and Kərəsāspa and Aži Sruvara. Other examples are seen in the "Seven Stations" of both Rustam and Isfandiyār, in Ardashīr's slaying of Haftānbukht and in popular legends attributed to many Iranian heroes. In folktales, hidden treasures are often guarded by serpents or dragons, symbolizing impediments and hostile forces.

The myth of the serpent Vṛtra has produced a good deal of discussion among Indo-Iranianists.[1] In Vedic mythology the warrior god Indra slays Vṛtra and releases the waters which it had withheld. In Iran the war god Vərəthraghna, the first part of whose name, *vərəthra*, corresponds to Vṛtra, appears to be in many respects a counterpart of Indra. Benveniste, however, argued that Vṛtra/Vərəthra was a neuter noun meaning "resistance, blockage, hostility"[2] and that the notion of a serpent was a later derivation from another epithet of Indra, *vṛtrahan*, "resistance breaker, victorious,"[3] and that the serpent Vṛtra was alien to Iran. Further he concluded that Vərəthraghna was the original Indo-Iranian war god, and Indra a later legendary figure who inherited Vərəthraghna's features.[4] This argument, however, has not found universal acceptance,[5] but attempts to prove that Vərəthraghna in Iran originally shared with Indra the myth of killing a serpent have not been entirely successful either.[6]

The division of the world by Frēdōn among his three sons, Salm (or Sarm),[7] Tūr (or Tūch[8] from *Turəč) and Ēraj, the founders of the nations of the Khwanīrah, is not referred to directly in the extant Avesta, but the *Dēnkard* mentions it in its summary of the lost *Chihrdād Nask*. Although the identification of the race of Salm (Av. Sairima) with the people of Rūm is a late development, perhaps dating to mid-Parthian times, the story itself must be considerably older. The race of Salm must have referred originally to a hostile neighbouring tribe of the Iranians in the east, who were possibly absorbed by either

[1] See B. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas* 47, 57ff; H. Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland* (Halle, 1923), 20ff. Benveniste and Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna* 106; Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 64, 92ff, 283.

[2] Benveniste and Renou, 6ff.

[3] Cf. H. W. Bailey, *Mithraic Studies* I. 18, who interprets *vṛt-ra* as meaning "the strong one".

[4] *Op. cit.*, 178ff.

[5] See Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott*, 46ff; Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre*, 43ff; J. de Menasce, "La promotion de Vahrām", *RHR* CXXXIII (1948), 5–18.

[6] See Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 64, n. 279.

[7] Ṭabarī I. 226; Salam or Sharam in Ibn Khurdādhbih, 15.

[8] Tūj in Ṭabarī I. 226; Ḥamza, 33; Bīrūnī, 102; Tūsh and Tūj in Ibn Khurdādhbih, 15; Tūz in Tha'ālibī, 42ff; in *Bundahishn*, ed. Anklesarie, 211.12, etc., *twc*.

the Turanians or Iranians,[1] and, in any event, did not find a prominent place in the Iranian saga. Later its place was given to the western people of Rūm in the same way that the Turanians were later identified with the Turks.

In Islamic and Middle Persian sources Frēdōn is made a descendant of Jamshēd generally by ten generations, the names of which are suffixed by the word *gāv* "cow".[2] A trace of this, which appears to have totemic origins, is seen in Firdausī's Birmāya, the cow which nourishes Frēdōn while he is brought up in secret for fear of Dahāk.[3] In the Pahlavī literature, Frēdōn is pictured as a righteous king who is destined to defeat Dahāk and to restore the legitimacy of kingship. The story of Kāva the Smith and his revolt against Dahāk, which was obviously created to account for the name of the national banner, *drafsh ī kāviyān*, must have attached itself to the legend of Frēdōn in Sasanian times.

Karshāsp (Av. Kərəsāspa). The third figure to press haoma, according to the Avesta,[4] was Thrita of the house of Sāma. Comparable to Aesculapius in classical mythology, Thrita is pictured as the first to introduce medicine, to cure illness and to heal wounds received in battle. As a reward Ahura Mazda gives him two sons, one Kərəsāspa (Karshāsp), a mighty warrior, and the other Urvāxšaya, a healer, a holy man and a law-giver. Urvāxšaya is killed by one Hitāspa and is duly avenged by Kərəsāspa.[5] The latter grows to be a Herculean figure and the most celebrated warrior of Avestan legends. It is only in the later traditions, and more particularly after Firdausī, that Rustam rises to dominate the Iranian epic. Kərəsāspa is also one of the Immortals of the Zoroastrian faith and plays a significant rôle in the final millennium as a helper of the Sōšyant. Whereas in other cases the information that the Avesta provides is fragmentary at best, in the case of Kərəsāspa the Avesta gives us all the basic information that we have in the Pahlavī books.[6] His chief exploits are: the slaying of the golden-heeled monster Gandarəwa, after having sacrificed to Arədvī Sūrā on the shores of lake Pisinaŋh;[7] the slaying of the venomous dragon Sruvara[8] (lit. "horned"); the slaying of the nine sons of Pathanya, the sons of Nivika, the sons of

[1] See Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, 155ff.
[2] See A. Tafazzolī in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Dānesh-nāma* 1. 9, for the names and the sources.
[3] *Shāh-nāma*, 41f.
[4] Yasna 9.10; *Vendidad* xx. 1–2.
[5] Yashts 15.28; 19.41.
[6] See H. S. Nyberg "La légende de Keresāspa" in J. D. C. Pavry (ed.), *Oriental Studies in Honour of C. E. Pavry* (Oxford, 1933), 336ff.
[7] Yasht 5.37; cf. p. 416.
[8] Yasna 9.11.

Dāštayāni, Histāspa of the golden crown, Varəšava of the house of Dāna, Pitaona, the mighty Arəzō.svamasa, and the horny-handed Snāvidhaka;[1] and the taming of the vehement and destructive wind.[2] Later Zoroastrian sources count among the victims of the hero a rain-withholding bird Kamak, and a wolf Kapūd, which the *Mēnōg ī Khrad*[3] calls also Pēhan (< Pathanya?). There can be little doubt that each episode was amplified with details in the oral tradition. Some Avestan passages,[4] as well as some of the later renderings, show epic qualities. Kərəsāspa's main epithets in Avestan are *naire.manah* "of manly mind", *gadhavara* "mace carrying" and *gaēsua* "curly haired".[5] In later tradition *naire.manah* has been personified in the form of Nēram and Narēmān, an ancestor of Rustam.

The *Vidēvdād* IX. 1 seems to associate Kərəsāspa with the Vaēkərəta region, generally assumed to refer to Gandhāra, and the *Bundahishn* XXIX. 8, 11, relates that he lies in the plain of Pēshyānsī in Kābulistān, overcome by Sleep, until the advent of the Sōshyant, when he will be awakened. According to the 11th-century anonymous "History of Sīstān", the kingdom of Sīstān was founded by Karshāsp.[6]

The Zoroastrian tradition about Karshāsp, however, is somewhat ambiguous, since he is also indirectly associated with unholy deeds. The summary of the *Chihrdād Nask*,[7] whose 15th chapter dealt with Karshāsp, refers to his disgrace: Ahura Mazda shows Zoroaster in a vision the pitiable state into which the soul of Karshāsp had fallen on account of the disrespect he had shown to Fire. The prophet intercedes on his behalf and ensures that Fire will exempt Karshāsp from consignment to hell. Another episode which sheds an unfavourable light on Karshāsp's career is related in the *Vidēvdād* IX. 1; it mentions Karshāsp's attraction to a female demon (*pairikā*), Xnathaitī, whom Ahriman created in Vaēkərəta. In addition, in the *Bundahishn* XXIX. 8, it is said that Sām (i.e. Karshāsp, see below) was immortal, but when he scorned the revelation of the Mazdayasnian religion, a Turk (i.e. a Turanian), Nāin by name, slew him with an arrow while he was asleep. Further, his genealogy as given in the *Bundahishn* under the name of Sām,[8] as well as one of the two genealogies given by Ṭabari,[9] traces his ancestry to Tūr and therefore makes him a blood-relation of the Turanians. The second genealogy given by Ṭabarī, on the other hand, makes Karshāsp descend

[1] Yasht 19.41–4.
[2] *Chihrdād Nask* as summarized in *Dēnkard* IX. 14.
[3] XXVII. 50.
[4] *E.g.* Yasht, 19.40, 44.
[5] Yasna 9.9–10; Yasht 5.37.
[6] *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, 3–4.
[7] *Dēnkard* IX. 14.
[8] XXXV. 32–3.
[9] I. 532–3.

from Manūchihr. In another passage of the *Dēnkard* which is repeated in a *rivāyat*, Karshāsp is counted together with Jamshēd and Frēdōn and Kai Ārish among those who received the good religion, but did not accept it, because the demon (*drug*) of disobedience residing in them was too strong.[1] In the Yashts, at any event, Karshāsp assumes all his might and brilliance and takes his place among the Zoroastrian Immortals. Thus, when the farrah departed from Yima for the third time, Karshāsp is said to have received it (Yasht 19. 38). Karshāsp's body, guarded by 99,999 fravašis of righteous men (Yasht 13. 61), is eventually resuscitated during the last millennium as a major helper of the Sōšyant and as the destroyer of Dahāk, whom he slays with his mace[2] after a fierce contest.

A possible explanation for this peculiar ambivalence towards Karshāsp may be that Zoroaster in his high-minded concentration on Ahura Mazda frowned upon this pagan hero, as also upon many pagan deities who were vividly pictured in popular lore. But the legends concerning Karshāsp – the product of a heroic age – continued nevertheless in popularity, and by the time the Yashts were redacted it was seen fit to restore him, like Yima, to his original status in a Zoroastrian guise. His later association with the house of Zāl may then have strengthened the baleful aspect of his legends in religious circles. On the other hand, it is also possible that such legends, like many myths, did not always depict their heroes or gods as beyond reproach, but included failures of deed and judgement that a balanced picture of human predicaments would warrant, and that such myths and legends continued to preserve the conflicting qualities of the god or hero, even though this figure received the sanction of a subsequent religious tradition. The application of the structural theory of myth, as developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss and his followers,[3] to the interpretation of such myths and legends, might provide an explanation for the frequent ups and downs, paradoxes and contradictions that we find in the careers of some Iranian heroes such as Jamshēd, Karshāsp and Siyāvush. Thus Karshāspa's sleep may possibly be considered a mitigation of his damnation, or Siyāvush's self-imposed exile, a mediation at one level between

[1] See Molé, *Culte*, 522; cf. Jaihānī in de Menasce, "Le témoignage de Jayhānī", 53.
[2] *Zand-i Vahman Yasht* ix. 20–1; *Bundahishn* xxxxiv. 35.
[3] See "La Geste d'Asdiwal", *Annuaire de l'É.P.H.É*: Sciences Religieuses (Paris 1958–9); *Mythologiques* 1, *Le Cru et le Cuit* (Paris, 1964), 9ff., 20, 64ff; *The raw and the cooked* (London, 1969), 1ff, 12, 56ff; G. S. Kirk, *Myth: its meaning and function in ancient and other cultures* Cambridge 1970), pp. 42ff.

the polar extremes of his father's wrath and his step-mother's embrace.

When the ancient epics were being arranged as historical accounts, the status of Karshāsp and his chronology remained somewhat uncertain. He is generally placed at the end of the Pishdadian dynasty and associated with Zāb. The *Bundahishn* does not call him a king, but simply mentions his name after Kai Khusrau.[1] The *Dēnkard*[2] and the *Mēnōg ī Khrad*[3] list him among the kings, but, oddly enough, place him between Kai Kavād and Kāvūs. The Islamic historians make him a co-ruler with Zāb, or his minister and helper, or his successor,[4] or a king under him.[5] Ṭabarī notes the variation in the tradition, but concludes that he did not have kingship.[6] This instability may indicate that the cycle of his legends originally belonged to a separate oral tradition and was never fully reconciled with the sequence of events in the central national epic.

The Karshāsp of the Islamic sources has little resemblance to the Avestan Kərəsāspa. Almost none of his ancient legends are mentioned.[7] His life-story according to much later versions is the subject of the *Garshāsp-nāma* versified by Asadī in the 11th century. Here he is made a descendant, through several generations, of Jamshēd and the daughter of the king of Zābul, whom Jamshēd marries in exile.[8] His many exploits take him to India, several wondrous and bizarre islands, Rūm, North Africa, Tūrān and China. He fights a number of wars on behalf of Dahāk, defeats the Faghfūr of China, offers allegiance to Frēdōn and sends his son Narēmān to the royal court with the message of his successes in China, and dies after making Narēmān his successor. The book contains a large number of stories of a popular character which appear to be late concoctions.

In Islamic sources Rustam is made a descendant of Karshāsp through generations which differ in number in the various accounts. Bīrūnī, who records an earlier version of this development, makes Karshāsp (Sām) the father of Dastān (Zāl); but, in the *Shāh-nāma*, his eponym Sām is made into a separate hero, who appears under Frēdōn and Manūchihr as a son of Nēram and as the father of Zāl. Thus Kərəsāspa, his clan name (Sāma) and his epithet (*naire.manah*) are made into three different

[1] xxxv. 32–33. [2] VIII. 13.12. [3] xxvii. 49–53.
[4] Mas'ūdī, *Tānbih*, 90; *Shāh-nāma*, 282. [5] Ḥamza, 35.
[6] I. 532–3; cf. Tha'ālibī, 130; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 104; *Mujmal*, 40ff.
[7] But see Molé, "Garshasp et les Sagsār", 128ff.
[8] Ed. Yaghmā'ī (Tehran, 1938), 36ff. Cf. *Mujmal*, 40–1; *Shāh-nāma*, 3046ff. The suspected spuriousness of this section of the *Shāh-nāma* has no bearing on the point.

figures: Karshāsp, Sām (or Sahm) and Nēram (or Narēmān),[1] all firmly based in Sīstān.[2]

The connection between Karshāsp and Rustam is problematic. Both are Herculean figures related to Sīstān. Since the similarities of their exploits are more apparent than real (see below, p. 453), they must belong to separate cycles of heroic stories. It is probable that the two cycles belonged to two different peoples who settled in Sīstān,[3] Karshāsp pertaining to the more ancient settlers of Drangiana,[4] and Rustam to the later Saka tribes. If this should be the case, then making Karshāsp an ancestor of Rustam at a later date would be readily understandable. The gradual fading away of the legends of Karshāsp before the fresher legends of the conquering Sakas would be understandable, too.

Manūchihr is mentioned in the Avesta only once (Yasht 13. 131). His name (Av. Manuščiθra, Mid. Pers. Manu(š)čihr) means "from the race of Manu", and refers to the ancient mythical figure, Manu, son of Vivasvant, who was regarded in India as the first man and father of the human race.[5] He has no place in Iranian tradition, where his rôle is played by Yima, and later Gayōmard. It appears, though, that we have a derivative of his name in Manush (Yasht 19. 1), the name of a mountain which is identified in the *Bundahishn* (ix. 3. 13) as belonging to the Alburz chain and as the birthplace of Manūchihr. As a proper name, Manush also occurs in a number of instances in Pahlavī books, notably in the genealogies of Manūchihr[6] and Luhrāsp.[7] In the Avesta, Manūchihr is called Airyāva, "helper of the Aryans" (Av. Airya).[8] Airya is also the base for the name of Iran (< *Airyanam*) as well as Ēraj (< Erēč < *Airya* + −*ē* of the oblique case + −*č*). It is evidently on this ground that the Avesta traces Manūchihr's descent from Ēraj.

Sources differ in characterizing the generations which intervene between Manūchihr and Ēraj. They range from placing 13 generations between them,[9] to making Manūchihr an immediate son of Ēraj.[10] But it is clear that his lineage from Ēraj was through Ēraj's daughter. A

[1] See Christensen, *Kayanides*, 130ff, for a comparative tabulation of Karshāsp's genealogies.

[2] See below, p. 454ff, on the theory which considers Rustam's legends a reshaping of those of Karshāsp.

[3] Marquart's identification of the Thamanaeans of Arachosia (Herodotus III. 117) as descendants of eponymous Sāma finds further support in this theory (*Untersuchungen* II, p. 176).

[4] *Contra*, Boyce, *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 101–2.

[5] See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 138ff; Oldenburg, *Die Religion des Vedas*, 281.

[6] *Bundahishn* xxxv. 13–15.

[7] *Ibid.* xxxv. 34.

[8] Bartholomae, 199. See Christensen, *Études*, 23, for other interpretations.

[9] Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 88; cf. *Bundahishn* xxxv. 13–15; Ṭabarī I. 430; Ibn al-Balkhī, 12.

[10] *Shāh-nāma*, 94; Bīrūnī, 104; Ṭabarī I. 432; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 117.

tradition quoted by Ṭabarī I. 431 relates that Frēdōn married Ēraj's daughter as well as a succession of her female descendants, until Manūchihr was born. This must have its explanation in the ancient Iranian custom of agnatic marriage, the purpose of which was to secure male successors to a deceased person without a male heir.

Although generally counted as a member of the Pishdadian dynasty, Manūchihr in fact begins a new era of the national history. The world is no longer ruled by a single king. A ferocious feud has started between Iranians and Turanians, and Manūchihr must contend with a powerful rival. That his reign was considered a turning point can be seen from the division by some sources of the ancient Iranian kings into three groups instead of two,[1] namely, the Pishdādīs, who ended with Frēdōn; the Ailānīs (Airānīs) who began with Manūchihr, and the Kayānīs. As in the case of Gayōmard, Hōshang, Jamshēd, and Frēdōn, there appears to be a certain "primacy" about Manūchihr. He displays some features of a primeval man which have become blurred in the context of the national history.[2] According to a tradition recorded by Mas'ūdī,[3] "he [Manūchihr] is like a tree [with its] branches for Iranian genealogy"; and "he has seven children, to whom are traced the majority of Iranian tribes and their kings in their genealogies". In his genealogy as given in the *Bundahishn*, we find that his ancestors consist of brother–sister pairs, a feature found also in the case of Hōshang. In later traditions Manūchihr is credited with great wisdom and glory. These traits are to be expected in a primeval man or king. In this light, the comparable position of Manu in Indian mythology takes on new relevance. We may speculate that Manu, who must have been known to the Iranians also in remote antiquity, gradually conceded his place in some Iranian region to his "son", whose legends then spread to other regions.

Manūchihr's chief achievement is avenging Ēraj, but as the national historical tradition took shape, he was also made a contemporary of Afrāsiyāb, who after attacking and defeating Iran rules the country for twelve years before a precarious peace is made between the two nations.

Successors of Manūchihr. Manūchihr's defeat at the hand of Afrāsiyāb furnishes yet another instance of a great king who suffers collapse after reaching the pinnacle of power and fame. There is considerable confusion in our sources as to the identity of Manūchihr's successor, with

[1] Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 88; Bīrūnī, 102.

[2] See A. Christensen, "Reste von Manu-Legenden in der iranischen Sagenwelt". *Festschrift F. C. Andreas* (Leipzig, 1916), 65ff.

[3] *Tanbīh*, 88.

indications of some hesitant patchwork on the part of Sasanian historiographers. Firdausī[1] gives Manūchihr's son Naudhar as his successor and depicts him as an oppressive and greedy monarch who neglects the advice of his father and causes great discontent among the nobles and priesthood. A semblance of peace between Afrāsiyāb and Manūchihr is maintained for a while, but Naudhar's accession affords Afrāsiyāb an opportune moment to strike and avenge the blood of Tūr by killing the new king. *Mujmal al-Tawārīkh* assigns seven months of kingship to Naudhar and mentions five years and twenty years as other reports.[2] Naudhar is not mentioned directly in the Avesta, but Naotairya occurs several times as an eponymous adjective.[3] As the father of Tūs, one of the Zoroastrian Immortals, and as the ancestor of the Kayanian kings, Naudhar must have occupied a venerable position in early Iranian legends. But his inclusion among the kings must have been a very late tradition, not universally followed, as indeed neither Ṭabarī, Ḥamza, Mas'ūdī, Bīrūnī, nor the Pahlavī sources know him as a king. His kingship must have been invented in the sources of Firdausī to provide a framework for the initial wars of Afrāsiyāb against Iran and for the exploits of Kārēn and Zāl against some of Afrāsiyāb's warriors.

The successor of Manūchihr, according to most sources,[4] was Zāb (Av. Uzava, Mid. Pers. Auzāv, in Arabic sources, Zaww), son of Tahmāsp (Av. Tumāspa), who is mentioned in the Avesta only once (Yasht 13. 131), after Thraētaona and before Manuščhithra. The *Dēnkard* VIII. 13. 11, on the other hand, in its summary of the *Chihrdād Nask*, mentions Zāb as a son of Tahmāsp and a king of Iran between Afrāsiyāb and Kai Kavād. Elsewhere (VII. 1.31) the *Dēnkard* mentions Zāb as a descendant of Manūchihr. Therefore we must conclude that this tradition, which is also followed in the *Bundahishn*[5] and by Ḥamza,[6] is not recent but dates at least from the early Parthian period. There is, however, considerable disagreement and confusion among the sources on Zāb's descent, the number of his regnal years, and the nature of his association with Karshāsp. Ṭabarī quotes several traditions about Zāb's lineage: in one he is a grandson of Manūchihr[7] and in another he is separated from Naudhar by ten generations.[8] A story mentioned by Ṭabarī about the flight of Zāb's father to Tūrān and his marriage to a descendant of Salm must have been modelled on the legend of Siyāvush.

[1] Pp. 243ff. [2] P. 43. [3] Yashts 5.76; 13.102; 17.55–6.
[4] See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 117; Ṭabarī I. 529ff; Ḥamza, 25; Tha'ālibī, 130–7; Bīrūnī, 218, 224. [5] xxxiii, 6. [6] Pp. 34–5.
[7] I. 531. [8] I. 529–30; cf. Ibn al-Balkhī, 13; and Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 118.

Despite the relative antiquity of his account and his reported defeat of Afrāsiyāb, Zāb remains a rather colourless and unexciting figure. He serves mainly to fill a gap between Manūchihr and Kai Kavād. Since Zāb is mentioned in Yasht 13 before Manūchihr, it is to be concluded that in early Zoroastrian times his place, like that of Karshāsp, had not yet been fixed in the hierarchy of national heroes, and only later, possibly in Parthian times, was he placed at the tail-end of the Pishdadian kings.

THE KAYANIAN ERA

With the Kayanians, we enter the second major era of national history. Whereas earlier kings are often of a mythical nature, and only artificially related by the medieval genealogies, the Kayanian kings from Kai Kavād to Kai Khusrau form a coherent group which exhibits dynastic features. Although their legends abound in mythical details and fantastic episodes, it is generally held that there must be a basis in the ancient history of the Avestan people for the extant account of them. Therefore it is thought that with the Kayanians we pass from chiefly mythical to legendary history. Christensen has argued vigorously for the historicity of the Kayanians in his standard monograph on the subject[1] and his views have found wide acceptance.

The name of the dynasty, Kayān (< Kavyān), is the plural of *kai* (Av. *kavi*), the title of the princes of this House. In Middle Persian and Persian, *kai* has come to mean "king", with the adjective *kayānī* assuming the meaning of "royal" or "regal", but the uses of kavi in the Avesta present some problems. In the Vedas, kavi meant a seer, a sage, a composer of hymns, who could produce *kāvya*, mantic utterances, particularly when stimulated by drinking *soma*.[2] In the Gāthās, the kavis appear to be the leaders of the community[3] of daēva-worshippers who refused to accept the teaching of Zoroaster. The prophet talks of them and of the *karpan*s and *usig*s, members of the priestly class, as his enemies and detractors. But King Vishtāspa, the prophet's supporter, is also called a kavi in the Gāthās. In Middle Iranian Manichaean writings, *kav* is used in the sense of "giant".[4] As used in the Gāthās the term, which implies some form of military leadership, may point to the rise of a class of warrior princes from a class which combined spiritual and temporal powers as a result of the spread of heroic

[1] *Kayanides*, 27ff.

[2] See L.Renou, "Études vèdiques", *JA* 1953, 180–3; J. Brough, "Soma and *Amanita muscaria*", *BSOAS* xxxiv (1971), 339.

[3] Cf. Christensen, *Kayanides*, 9.

[4] Henning, *BSOAS* xii (1948), 53f.

conditions among the Avestan tribes. Gershevitch, however, has sought to solve the contradiction in the Avestan usage of kavi by removing the meaning of "prince, ruler" and postulating that the Iranian kavis were, like their Indian counterparts, composers of hymns to various gods. One kavi family, that of the Kayanians, rose to temporal power and "used the professional description kavi as its personal dynastic surname".[1] Zarathustra, in addressing his protector as kavi Vištāspa, would not have associated the king's dynastic name with the class name of the priestly hymn-writers, for the dynastic name, according to Gershevitch, affected the later semantic developments of kavi, and its original meaning eventually fell into disuse. This attractive theory, however, requires a reinterpretation of the Gathic passages where kavi has been thought to occur with the implication of rulership.[2]

Although in post-Avestan tradition the Kayanians number fourteen, it is clear from the Avesta that the first eight form a distinct group and belong to a pre-Avestan tradition. These eight, according to the Zamyād Yasht, 70–2, were all in possession of the royal farrah and were all heroic, righteous and fearless. They also figure among the heroes whose fravashis are commemorated in the Farvardin Yasht, 132. They are enumerated in the Zamyād Yasht, 71, as follows: Kavi Kavāta, Kavi Aipi.vaŋhu, Kavi Usadhan (Usan in Yashts 5.45 and 14.39), Kavi Aršan, Kavi Pisinaŋh, Kavi Byaršan, Kavi Syāvaršan and Kavi Haosravah. Only Kavi Kavāta (Kai Kavād), Kavi Usan (Kāvūs), and Kavi Haosravah (Kai Khusrau) are recognized in post-Avestan tradition as kings. Others appear mostly in genealogies and have left but a dim memory of themselves.

The second phase of the Kayanian rule consists of the reign of Luhrāsp and Gushtāsp and includes the holy wars of the Zoroastrians and the exploits of Isfandiyār. This phase must be considered an independent cycle. It pictures a different environment and different personae. Luhrāsp and Gushtāsp, their chief antagonist, Arjāsp, and Gushtāsp's trusted adviser and vizier, Jāmāsp, all have names ending with Av. *aspa* "horse", which must refer to a chief element in the culture and the animal husbandry of their respective tribes. The tenuous connection between Luhrāsp and the last of the original Kayanian line Kai Khusrau has all the marks of artificiality and indicates a gap, the length of which

[1] Gershevitch, *Avestan Hymn*, p. 185.

[2] E.g., Yasna 32.14. Cf. the latest translation in Insler, *Gāthās*, 49, n. 16. T. Burrow considers Kavi a title used by Indo-Aryans in Iran, with whom Vištāspa, who had also adopted this title, fought; "Proto-Indoaryans", pp. 131–2.

is hard to determine. It is not improbable that the house of Gushtāsp's claim of descent from early Kayanians is similar to the claim of the Parthians and Sasanians, much later, to late Kayanian descent.

The third phase of the Kayanian rule from Bahman to Dārā is again marked by new and distinctive features which set it apart from the second phase and bring it into historical times. Although the reality of Vishtāspa's existence and the chief events of his career cannot be seriously doubted, historical facts about the other Kayanians, from Kai Kavād to Kai Khusrau, are more elusive. The identification of the Kayanian and Achaemenian kings, however, which was advocated by some scholars, notably J. Hertel,[1] has no basis in reality,[2] as was soundly demonstrated by Christensen.[3]

The geographical milieu of the Kayanians. Avestan references to the Kayanian kings leave no doubt that it is to eastern Iran, namely the region comprising Chorasmia, Sogdiana, Margiana, Bactria, Herat and the basin of the river Helmand that we should look for the cradle of the Iranian historical tradition. Western and southern Iran are conspicuously absent from this tradition. No mention of Media or Persia occurs in the Avesta. The only exception is Rhages (Rayy), which as the most north-easterly large city of Media appears in two late Avestan passages.[4] On the other hand, the Avesta is familiar with many eastern Iranian place names. The first chapter of the *Vendīdād*, which treats of the eighteen perfect lands created by Ahura Mazda and the plagues which Ahriman inflicted upon each, has the following seven lands at the head of the list: Airyana Vaēja (thought to be Chorasmia), Sughdh (Sogdiana), Mōuru (Margiana), Bāxdhī (Balkh, Bactria), Nisāya (Nisā), Harōyu (Herat), Vaēkərəta (Gandhāra).[5] Broadly, these are held to be the lands of the Avestan people. Since they form an extensive area, it would be more appropriate to say that these are the lands which the Avestan people knew or were associated with intimately.

The existence of an eastern Iranian empire, parallel with or prior to that of the Medians, finds reflections in Greek sources, as W. B. Henning pointed out in his lucid exposition of the geographical location of the Avestan people.[6] According to the story of the River Akes, which

[1] *Achaemeniden und Kayaniden* (Leipzig, 1924), 74ff.

[2] Henning, *Zoroaster*, 29.

[3] *Kayanides*, 3ff.

[4] See Henning, *Zoroaster*, 43. But cf. Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII (1964), pp. 36–7, who considers Ragha of the Avesta to have been in the east, and that the Median Ragā was named after it.

[5] See S. Levi, "Notes indiennes" *JA* CCVI (1925), 65ff; H. W. Bailey, "Hvatanica IV", *BSOAS* x (1942), 917, n. 1. See also below, pp. 446–7.

[6] *Zoroaster*, 42–3.

Herodotus quotes (III. 117), presumably from Hecataios, the Chorasmians were in ancient days masters of the valley of the Akes (today's Harī Rūd and its continuation, Tejen)[1] and they exercised some measure of suzerainty over the Hyrcanians, the Parthians, the Sarangians of Sīstan, and the Thamanaeans[2] of Arachosia. "Both Marv and Herat were then occupied by the Khwarezmians whom Hecataios, in one of the few fragments of his work that has come down to us, places to the east of the Parthians".[3] When the Chorasmian state[4] was overthrown by Cyrus, the southern provinces were absorbed into the Persian empire, and the Chorasmians withdrew to the more northerly regions around the lower course of the Oxus, where they have been known to live ever since. Henning adduces some further support for the probable identification of the original home of the Avestan people, Airyana Vaēja, with Chorasmia by drawing attention to some similarities between the language of the Gāthās and Khwarazmian.[5]

Naturally there arises the question that if indeed Cyrus ended the Chorasmian confederation how could one explain the fact that he does not appear in the Avesta as a villain or otherwise, and that all we hear about is the feud with the Turanians?

The present writer is of the opinion that this question has not found a truly satisfactory answer and is inclined to believe that the Zoroastrian tradition had evolved and taken shape prior to the rise of Cyrus, so that the advent of the Achaemenians was neither reflected in it nor did it affect that tradition.

Addressing himself to the same question, Christensen, however, argues[6] that actually the Chorasmian state toward the close of the 7th century B.C. had been weakened by internal dissent and parochial conflicts; that the early followers of the prophet were far more deeply involved in the dispute with their immediate neighbours than with a foreign power from the south; and that Cyrus's lenient religious policy, far from hurting the Zoroastrian believers, facilitated their proselytizing; therefore there was no cause to bear any grudge against him. It is argued, moreover, that once the Avestan people became the subjects of the Achaemenian empire, it was hardly expedient or in the interest of the missionary activities of the Zoroastrians to treat the Achaemenians with disrespect. I find the argument hardly convincing.

If we accept Chorasmia as the homeland of the Avestan people, we

[1] Identification made by Marquart; see his *Wehrot und Arang*, 3ff; *Erānšahr*, 155.

[2] See p. 433, n. 3 above.

[3] Henning, *op. cit.*, 42.

[4] A "confederacy" rather than a state or empire. Cf. ch. 6.

[5] Henning, *op. cit.* 44–5.

[6] *Kayanides*, 34.

must still bear in mind that the majority of the geographical names in the more ancient parts of the Avesta, such as the River Vaŋhu Daiti, Lake Čaēčasta, Mount Hara, Lake Frazdānu, defy identification, and although a number of them are equated in later Pahlavī literature with certain eastern and north-eastern locations, the accuracy of such equations remains in doubt. Thus, although we may be fairly certain of the geographical milieu of the Kayanian cycle in a general way, identifying the exact location or date of the people whose energy and talent gave birth to the earliest manifestations of the Iranian culture is more difficult to determine. The springtime of this culture, shrouded in remote antiquity and reflected only in the earliest myths and legends of the Iranian people, may have passed in a relatively small region, whose toponymy survived as a tradition and was later applied to other regions which the Iranians occupied in their migrations. In the same way that the Sasanians tended to read western and southern localities into the eastern epic cycles, the traditional identification of some of the vague Avestan geographical references with known eastern nomenclature may owe something to Parthian influence. The occurrence in the recently found Elamite Persepolis tablets of some mythical and legendary names, which had previously been known only from the eastern epic tradition, raises the possibility that in the early centuries of the second millennium B.C., a pan-Iranian fund of myths and legends took shape before the eastern and western Iranians separated (see p. 388 above.)

THE HOUSE OF AFRĀSIYĀB

In the national history the legends of the early Kayanians are inextricably interwoven with those of the house of Afrāsiyāb, the Turanian hero whose feud with Iran dominates the Kayanian epic cycle. Afrāsiyāb (Av. Fraŋrasyan; Mid. Pers. Frāsyāv, Frāsyāk, etc.; Ṭabari: Firāsyāt; Dīnawarī: Farāsiyāb) is one of the most prominent figures of the national epic. In Pahlavī and Islamic sources Afrāsiyāb's descent is traced to Tūr: the *Shāh-nāma* (248), giving the shortest genealogy, makes him the great-grandson of Tūr; the *Bundahishn* (xxxv. 17) has six generations and Mas'ūdī (*Murūj* II. 117) has seven generations between the two. All agree on his father's name, Pashang. Although Afrāsiyāb is generally depicted as an arch-enemy of Iran and an agent of Ahriman, he is not seen as a monster incarnate, as is Dahāk. In Yasht 19.93 he is even said to have possessed the royal farrah when he killed the wicked Zainigav, a follower of the Lie. This foe, the *Bundahishn* (xxxiii. 9) tells us, had seized the Iranian throne and the Iranians sought

Afrāsiyāb's help against him. The *Aogemadaēčā* (60–1) describes the iron-walled underground palace which Afrāsiyāb had built as one thousand times the height of a man and lighted by stars, sun and moon, all fashioned by the king himself. He is said to have enjoyed the best of life in this palace, which is called Hankana in the Avesta (Pers. Hang).[1]

In post-Avestan times Afrāsiyāb takes his place in the historical tradition as the arch-enemy of Iran and of Iranian kings. He makes his appearance in the reign of Manūchihr, whom he defeats, and continues as a powerful enemy of Iranshahr during the reign of the next four kings. He seems to live forever. In fact, he represents almost the totality of Turanian opposition to Iran and the calamities which befall the country during its long feud with Turan. Although a new phase of this struggle opens with Gushtāsp and his Turanian adversary, Arjāsp, its events belong to a new era, that of the Zoroastrian epic cycles. When Rustam was introduced into the national tradition, he became the main defender of Iran against the forays of the Turanian enemy. His victories against Afrāsiyāb, however, are generally inconclusive; and it remains for Gēv and Kai Khusrau, as recorded in the *Shāh-nāma*, to bring Afrāsiyāb to his end.

In the Zamyād Yasht (56–64) we read that his attempt to capture the royal farrah of the Aryan race failed; and the Ābān Yasht (41–3) informs us that his sacrifice to Arədvī Sūrā for the same purpose was unsuccessful. On the contrary, Kai Khusrau's wish to slay Afrāsiyāb and avenge the murder of his father was granted.[2] Kai Khusrau is helped to achieve this end by the yazad Haoma, who chains Afrāsiyāb and drags him to the shores of Lake Čaēčasta so that Kai Khusrau can take his life (Yasht 9. 17–18). In Yasna 11.7 we read that Haoma fettered Afrāsiyāb, who had taken refuge behind his iron walls. In the *Shāh-nāma*,[3] we find the yazad Haoma transformed into a holy man, Hōm, who at the end assists Kai Khusrau to capture the fugitive Afrāsiyāb from the waters of Khanjast (a corruption of Čaēčasta). In the post-Avestan traditions many of the originally north-eastern localities are transferred to the north-west; Afrāsiyāb takes shelter in a mountain-cave near a lake in Āzarbāijān, apparently Lake Urmīya (Čaēčasta).[4]

[1] Yasna 11.7; Yasht 5.41–3; cf. *Aogemadaēčā*, 60–1.

[2] Yashts 9.21–23; 19.77.

[3] P. 1386.

[4] For the identification of Čaēčasta with a lake in Āzarbāijān, and with Lake Urmīya, see *Shāh-nāma*, 1386, 1391, 1397; Mustaufī, *Tārīkh-i Guzida*, 94–5; *Id.*, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 80–5; cf. Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*, 112, 115; Pour-e Davud, *Khurda Avesta*, 132–3; *Id.*, *Farhang-i Irān-i Bāstan*, 252; V. Minorsky in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed. IV., p. 1037.

In the Avesta, the gravest sin of Afrāsiyāb is participation in the slaying of Siyāvush,[1] which receives ample elaboration in later literature. A wicked king, Afrāsiyāb is depicted as an agent of desolation and ruin. During his reign, the rivers dry up and the trees wither and a great many people perish. In the *Bundahishn* (xxxiii. 6) we read that he withheld rain from Iran; in contrast, according to the *Dēnkard*,[2] Zāb, after defeating Afrāsiyāb, restored prosperity to Iran by increasing the many streams and cultivated lands of Iran. In view of Afrāsiyāb's frequent association with drought and destruction, it may be speculated that his legends absorbed some features of an adverse deity associated with the inhibiting of rain. In this respect it is significant that according to a tradition preserved in Ṭabarī,[3] the Festival of the Waters, namely the day Ābān of the month Ābān, which constituted the third most important Iranian festival, commemorated the victory of Zāb over Afrāsiyāb. A further confirmation of Afrāsiyāb's association with drought may be seen in his slaying of Siyāvush, who shows aspects of a vegetation god (see below, p. 450–1).

Just as the Iranian kings are surrounded by able warriors, so too is Afrāsiyāb. A large number of Turanian heroes are mentioned in the *Shāh-nāma*, mostly as counterparts to Iranian warriors in single combat, but also as generals of the Turanian army. Chief among these are close relatives of Afrāsiyāb. One, Aghrērath, achieves renown through his pro-Iranian sympathies. The other, Garsēvaz, becomes notorious for plotting the murder of Siyāvush. Aghrērath actually figures among the righteous dead of the Zoroastrians, for his fravaši is commemorated in the Farvardīn Yasht (131), where he is placed between Zāb and Manūchihr. His death by the order of Afrāsiyāb is avenged by Kai Khusrau.[4] In Pahlavī literature he is given as a brother of Afrāsiyāb.[5] He is an Immortal and is called Gōpat-shāh according to the *Bundahishn* (xxix. 6);[6] but according to another passage (xxxv. 23–5) he was granted a son with this title. The *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* (xc. 5) does not identify Gōpat-shāh with Aghrērath but mentions the former among the Immortals as the ruler of the land of "Gōpat", which is described as co-terminous with Ērān Vēj. On the other hand, the *Bundahishn* (xxix. 6) places him in the land of Sakistān and the *Mēnōg ī Khrad*[7] places him in Ērān Vēj. Gōpat-shāh probably referred originally to the ruler of *Gava*

[1] Yashts 5:50; 15:30–3; 17:41–2.
[2] VII. 1.31; see also Bīrūnī, 218.6.
[3] I, p. 531.
[4] Yasht 9.18–22.
[5] *Bundahishn* xxxv. 17.
[6] Cf. *Zand ī Vahman Yasht* iii. 2; and *Dādastān ī Dēnīg* xc. 4.
[7] xliv. 24; lxii. 31.

(Sogdiana), but was later understood to be a minotaur[1] (*gō*, *gav* "bull, cattle"), possibly under the influence of Babylonian legends[2] or sculptures representing fantastic figures.[3] K. V. Trever saw a rendering of Gōpat-shāh in the motif of the human-headed bull found on some Sasanian seals.[4]

Garsēvaz is mentioned in the Avesta (Yasht 19.77) as a foe of Iran who was killed by Kai Khusrau in revenge for the murder of Siyāvush. Although the Avesta does not refer to Garsēvaz as a brother of Afrāsiyāb, the *Bundahishn* (XXXV. 17) presents him as such and as a son of Pashang. He is among the chief villians of the national history, and Firdausī (*Shāh-nāmā*, 1394ff.) recounts at length both his intrigues against Siyāvush and Kai Khusrau's pitiless revenge on him.

The most distinguished warriors of Afrāsiyāb's clan, however, are Vēsa, Afrāsiyāb's uncle, and Vēsa's sons. In Yasht 5.57–9 it is said that the sons of Vēsa sacrificed to Arədvī Sūrā and asked for victory over Tūs and for power to destroy the Iranians. But it was Tūs's desire to overwhelm the sons of Vēsa and to devastate the Turanian lands, a desire granted by the yazads (Yasht 5.54–5). In the *Shāh-nāma* it is the house of Gōdarz in particular which is pitted against the house of Vēsa. Of Vēsa's sons, Firdausī mentions Hōmān, who was killed by Bēžan; Pīlsam,[5] killed by Rustam; and Pīrān, slain by Gōdarz. Of these, Pīrān is by far the most prominent. A valiant warrior and a skilful general, he shows noble traits also. It is Pīrān who helps Siyāvush to take refuge with Afrāsiyāb, and it is he who saves the life of Kai Khusrau and his mother after Siyāvush's murder. Since Pīrān is caught between loyalty to his king and sympathy for Siyāvush and his son, his end is not without tragic overtones. The mood is eloquently created in Kai Khusrau's tearful oration over Pīrān's corpse after his death in battle.[6] Firdausī's somewhat ambivalent treatment of him is already adumbrated in passages in the Yashts (see above) which refer to "the valiant sons of the house of Vēsa".

[1] *Mēnōg ī Khrad* lxii. 32–3.

[2] See J. M. Unvala, "Gopatshah", *BSOS* v (1929), 505–6.

[3] Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 56; Bivar, *Western Asiatic Seals*, 27.

[4] "Gopatshakh-pastykh-tsar", *Trudy otdela vostoka gosudarstvennogo ermitazha* II (1940), pp. 71–85.

[5] *Bundahishn* XXXV. 18 records "Sān" instead.

[6] *Shāh-nāma*, 1264–5; cf. Islāmī Nadūshan, *Zindagī va marg-i pahlavānān* (Tehran, 1348/1969), 250ff.

THE FIRST KAYANIAN PERIOD

Kai Kavād. According to all the sources, Kai Kavād is the founder of the Kayanian dynasty. The divergences among his genealogies[1] in Pahlavī and Islamic sources, which range from making him a son of Zāb to making him a commoner, are typical of founders of dynasties and only show that his connection with the earlier kings is forced. The *Bundahishn* (xxxv. 28) tells us that he was abandoned in a basket and found by Zāb, who adopted him as his own son. This familiar incident implies the assumption of a noble lineage, which in Islamic sources is explicitly traced in various ways through Zāb to Naudhar and Manūchihr. According to the *Shāh-nāma*, Kai Kavād was sought and found in the Alburz mountains, after it was decided that Tūs and Gustahm, the surviving sons of Naudhar, were not graced with the royal farrah and, thus, were not fit to rule. Ṭabarī[2] places Kai Kavād's residence at the Irano-Turanian border, near the River Balkh.

The Avesta does not specify the family relationships among the early Kayanians, but in the Pahlavī sources Kai Kavād is followed by his son Kai Apīvēh, who fathers Kai Arish, Kai Byarsh (Kai Armīn in the *Shāh-nāma*), Kai Pisinang or Kai Pīsīn (Kai Pashīn in the *Shāh-nāma*; cf. *Afshīn*, the title of the kings of Ushrūsana) and Kai Us (Kāvūs).[3] Except for the last, all these are figures of little significance, as witnessed by the frequent corruption of their names in Islamic sources. The *Shāh-nāma* even omits Kai Apīvēh and attributes his four sons directly to Kai Kavād.[4] Whatever information the Parthian and early Sasanian traditions may have retained about these figures is now lost.

Kāvūs. The figure of Kāvūs, on the other hand, is prominent, colourful and complex. His name is recorded in the Avesta in two forms: Usadhan and Usan.[5] The account of his career is laden with mythical or fantastic incidents. His apparent counterpart in Indic mythology, Kāvya Uśanas, is a Vedic figure associated with Indra and twice called *kavi* (sage). It is said in the *Rig-Veda*[6] that Uśanas fashioned for Indra the thunderbolt that slew the serpent Vṛtra, gave Agni (Fire) to Manu and established Agni as Manu's sacrificer.[7] None of these features,

[1] See Justi, *Namenbuch*, 159.
[2] I. 535; cf. Ḥamza, 35, and Tha'ālibī, 153, who place Kai Kāvūs's residence in Balkh.
[3] See the *Bundahishn* xxxv. 29–30, 34.
[4] P. 314.
[5] See Bartholomae, 405, 406, and Justi, *Namenbuch*, 334.
[6] I. 121.12; *Vendīdād*, 34.2.
[7] See R. Pischel and K. F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien* II (Stuttgart, 1897), 166, and Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 96, 147.

however, is met in the Iranian tradition, although Kāvūs's ascent into the sky and his subsequent fall are echoed in a similar myth attributed to Uśanas' step-son.[1] The basis for the association of the two is chiefly confined to similarity in name; if we are led to dissociate them, it is particularly because the Kayanians are by common consent products of Iranian development in the post-Indo-Iranian period, even though it happens that among the Kayanians only the two who seem to have a Vedic counterpart, namely Kāvūs and Kai Khusrau, receive in the Avesta a treatment similar to that accorded to the mythical Pishdadian figures.

Kavi Usan possesses superhuman power (Yasht 14.39). He sacrifices to Arədvī Sūrā, asking for victory over men and demons and for power to become the greatest ruler of countries (Yasht 5.45–6). From the summary of the *Sūdgar Nask* given in the *Dēnkard* (IX. 22.4–12) it is evident that the chief features of Kāvūs's legends as known from later sources had already been recorded in the more recent parts of the Avesta. In the summary in the *Dēnkard* are mentioned: his sovereignty over the seven climes; his domination of the demons; and his building of seven palaces – one of gold, two of silver, two of steel and two of crystal (*ābgēnagīn*) – on top of the Alburz mountain, wherein all who entered were rejuvenated.[2] Also included are his subduing of the demons of Māzandarān; his deception by the Demon Wrath; his ambitious challenge to the yazads by his abortive attempt to ascend the skies[3] with the help of demons; his disgrace and fall; the withdrawal of the farrah from him; and his becoming mortal. His career as related in the *Sūdgar Nask* is particularly reminiscent of that of Yima. According to the *Bundahishn* (xxxii. 11) a spring in Kāvūs' dwelling imparted eternal life, and the *Dēnkard* (*ibid.*) says that entering one of his palaces turned old men into 15-year-old youths.

Of the two disastrous expeditions which are attributed to Kāvūs' reign in the *Shāh-nāma*, the one to Māzandarān apparently reflects the memory of an unsuccessful campaign by the Iranians in a neighbouring country. The one to Hāmāvarān[4] must echo a similar memory; in late Sasanian times the location was taken for Ḥimyar (Yemen), which was counted among the regions of Nēmrōz, to the south. Whether the story

[1] Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* I. 441.
[2] Cf. *Bundahishn* xxxii. 11.
[3] Cf. *Aogemadaēčā*, 6.
[4] See Darmesteter, *Études iraniennes* II. 221ff; Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, 26, n. 1; Nöldeke, *Nationalepos* p. 49, n. 1; Christensen, *Kayanides*, 110, n. 4; Monchi-zadeh, pp. 74ff, 80–91, 144–5 for discussion of this name.

is a duplication of the Māzandarān campaign,[1] the original form of the Māzandarān expedition,[2] or whether it mirrors a lost campaign in another region, it serves, like the first, to underscore the rashness of Kāvūs and the fact that his actions were not always favoured or directed by God. This conclusion fits well with some ungodly aspects of his character, which led to the removal of the farrah from him.

The original location of the land that the Iranians called Māzandarān as well as the meaning of the name is somewhat problematic. It was applied originally to a hostile land of different cultic beliefs known to the Iranians in their legendary period. Its use as an appellation for Ṭabaristān is fairly late[3] and probably dates from late Sasanian times.[4] Early Islamic geographers do not mention it. That the name Māzandarān, which literally appears to mean "the gate or the valley of the giants,"[5] was somewhat ambiguous in terms of its location, is indicated by the fact that it was vaguely applied also to some western regions, including Syria and Yemen.[6]

D. Monchi-zadeh has argued[7] that the Māzandarān which figures in the national epic refers in fact to an eastern region in the vicinity of India or within its borders. As his chief argument he points out that the name of the demons that Rustam defeats during his rescue mission to Māzandarān, namely Arzhang, Dīv-i Safīd, Sanja, Pūlād-i Ghandī (which the author amends to Nōla and Ghandī) and Bīd, are practically all taken from the names of Panḍava kings of India or their dignitaries as mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*.

If indeed the expeditions of Kāvūs to Māzandarān and Hāmāvarān belong to his old legends, it only stands to reason that the scene of events should be sought in the east and that the identifications with Ṭabaristān and Ḥimyar be considered late. And if they developed out of Rustam's legends, again the Saka origin of Rustam's saga favours the seeking of both Māzandarān and Hāmāvarān in the regions of Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan, where the Saka tribes made repeated inroads. The assignment of an eastern region – probably in Afghan or North-West Frontier regions – to the original Mazainya country is

[1] Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* I. 592; Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 30.

[2] Cf. Monchi-zadeh, p. 145.

[3] See Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 368–9; V. Minorsky in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st. ed., III, p. 424.

[4] Monchi-zadeh, pp. 145ff.

[5] From Av. *mazainya-*, Mid. Pers. *mazan*, "giant, monster, gigantic"; see W. B. Henning, "The Book of the Giants", *BSOAS* XI (1943), p. 54.

[6] M. Qazvīnī, "Muqaddama-yi qadīm-i Shāh-nāma", *Bist Maqāla* II, 32–6; Gardīzī, pp. 9–10; *apud* Monchi-zadeh, pp. 69ff.

[7] Pp. 62ff, 142ff.

strengthened by W. B. Henning's proposal[1] to identify Varəna (which occurs in the list of countries in Vendīdād and is often associated with Māzandarān) with Indian Varṇu (Buner, north of Peshawar?). This view also fits well with T. Burrow's opinion that there were clashes and battles, both physical and religious, between Iranians and the future Indo-Aryans while some of the latter were still in Iran.[2] One might assume that later, when Māzandarān was identified with Ṭabaristān, a number of events related to Dahāk, Frēdōn, Manūchihr, Rustam and others were transferred to the latter region.

The story of Kai Kāvūs falling in love with Sūdāba (Su'dā in most Arabic sources), the daughter of the king of Yemen, has all the features of a folk romance and represents another case of transferring the scene of events from the east to the west.

Hildegard Lewy has argued[3] that it is the legends of Nabu-na'id, who was defeated by Cyrus, which are the basis of the cycle of legends of Kāvūs. Nabu-na'id, according to Lewy, was particularly interested in the cult of the moon, the sun and other stellar deities. Under the influence of the Arameans, he chose as his chief deity Sin, the moon-god. He incurred the antagonism of the Babylonian priesthood, was considered insane by some of his opponents, worked out his own apotheosis and secured for himself a throne in the vault of the heavens, following the ancient Aramean custom of deifying their kings. Thus, alienating the opposing religious faction, he appeared to challenge the gods. The legends developing from his career were subsequently transferred to Cyrus' son Cambyses, whose name was pronounced by the Arameans as Kābūs or Qābūs, and whose harsh treatment of the Babylonians exonerated the memory of Nabu-na'id. Later, when Balāsh I, the Parthian king, ordered the collection of various religious and historic traditions, the legends of Nabu-na'id were transferred to eastern Iran. Through the similarity and coalescence of the name Kāyus (Kavi Usā) in east-Iranian pseudo-historic lore, the legends found a place in the Iranian tradition. These events may explain, according to Lewy, the fact that Kāvūs is equated in Islamic sources with Namrūd and Bukhtanaṣṣar and is said to have ruled over Babylon. The transfer of his seat to Balkh would then be a late Iranizing measure.

Lewy's identification of the Kāvūs legend with the presumed legends

[1] *BSOAS* XII (1947), pp. 52–3.

[2] "Proto-Indoaryans", pp. 134–5. His assumption, however, that Varəna was to the east of the Avestan people and Māzandarān to their west in north central Iran is unwarranted.

[3] "The Babylonian background of the Kay Kâûs legend", *ArOr* XVII. 2 (1949), 28–109.

of Nabu-na'id through Cambyses is highly speculative. It ignores the context of east-Iranian tradition; moreover, it places unwarranted reliance on late and confused identifications, such as are found so frequently in Islamic sources whose authors tried, rather clumsily, to reconcile Iranian and Biblical traditions by an almost mechanical and hence unconvincing equation of unrelated figures. Even if some aspect of the Kāvūs legends, such as his flight into the skies and his fall, should show Mesopotamian influences, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the basic legend of Kāvūs, which fits well into the context of the Iranian tradition.

Among the figures closely associated with the reign of Kāvūs in the religious tradition is Ōshnar (Av. Aošnara), whose fravaši is commemorated in the Farvardīn Yasht, 132, and is mentioned again in the *Afrīn i Zardusht*, 2, as the epitome of wisdom.[1] In the Pahlavī literature he is associated with Kāvūs. According to the *Dēnkard* VII (Intr. 36–7), Ōshnar had a share of the farrah which left Yima,[2] was an advisor and chief vizier (*framadhār*) to Kāvūs, and administered the seven climes on his behalf. Even in his mother's womb Ōshnar displayed miraculous power and struck Ahriman at birth. He prevailed over the non-Aryans in discussion and imparted wise counsel to Aryan countries. According to the *Bundahishn*[3] he was killed by the machinations of demons. There can be no doubt as to the priestly background of this early Zoroastrian figure; this should explain his practical disappearance from Islamic sources. Firdausī does not know of him.

Siyāvush. In the Avesta, Siyāvush (Av. Syāvaršan; Mid. Pers. Syāvakhš) is mentioned among the righteous heroes whose fravašis are celebrated.[4] His treacherous murder by Afrāsiyāb and the Turanian Garsēvaz, and the subsequent avenging of his blood by his son Kai Khusrau are also mentioned.[5] But there is little doubt that the legends of his ordeal by fire at the court of his father, his flight to Turan, his building of the marvellous castle of Kang-dēz, his marriage to Afrāsiyāb's daughter and the birth of his son must also have had their origin among the Avestan people and appear to have fed popular fancy from ancient times. Siyāvush's renown among the Iranian peoples of Central Asia can be inferred from Bīrūnī's statement[6] that the people of Chorasmia began their era with the building of the city of Khwārazm 980 years before Alexander, and then made Siyāvush's entrance into it the

[1] Cf. *Dādastān i Dēnig* xxxvii. 35.
[2] See Molé, *Culte*, 463.
[3] xxxiii. 8.
[4] Yasht 13.132.
[5] Yashts 9.18; 17.38; 19.77.
[6] *Āthar*, 235.

beginning of their era, 92 years after the building of Khwārazm. The people of Sogdiana attributed the building of Bukhārā, the Sogdian capital, to Siyāvush and believed that he was buried there. According to Narshakhī in his "History of Bukhārā",[1] a 10th-century work, the Zoroastrians (*mughān*) of the city used to venerate his grave and every year on New Year's day, before the sunrise, each believer would bring a cock there and would kill it in memory of Siyāvush.

From the scattered accounts of Siyāvush it is apparent that he must have been the focus of a mourning cult dating from pre-Zoroastrian times. Although the non-Zoroastrian context of references to him in Islamic sources, notably Firdausī, Dīnawarī, and Ṭabarī, has robbed his legend of its religious and cultic aspects, enough traces have been left to show its once ritualistic and religious import. Narshakhī, our chief source in this respect, relates (*ibid.*, 24) that the people of Bukhārā have wonderful songs (*surūds*) concerning the slaying of Siyāvush, and that the minstrels call these songs "the vengeance of Siyāvush" (*kīn-i Siyāvush*). His subsequent comment (*ibid.*, 33) leaves no doubt that these songs were in fact mourning songs (*nauḥa*) which the minstrels called "the weeping of the Magi" (*giristan-i mughān*).

Tha'ālibī[2] and Firdausī[3] record a tradition according to which cosmic disturbances took place when Siyāvush was killed. Such legends could point only to belief in the sanctity of the slain hero. This inference finds support in Ibn al-Balkhī, who recounts[4] that when the news of Siyāvush's death reached Iran, his father Kai Kāvūs lamented deeply, saying, "It was not Afrāsiyāb who killed him; it was I who killed the holy [*rauḥānī*] Siyāvush." It is to be noted that Siyāvush's son, Kai Khusrau, too, has a certain holiness about him (see below), and Ibn al-Balkhī tells us[5] that according to the Persians he was a prophet.

The fact that Siyāvush was the centre of a mourning cult in Transoxiana can be clearly seen from Kāshgharī's account: "Every year the Zoroastrians go to the Diž Rō'īn, near Bukhārā, where Siyāvush was killed. They weep and offer a sacrifice there and pour the blood of the sacrificial animal on his grave; and this is their custom."[6] The existence in Sogdiana of mourning rites for the dead, involving weeping and lamenting and self-mortification, has been asserted also by Bīrūnī.[7] Further evidence for Siyāvush's connection with mourning rites can be

[1] *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, pp. 32–3. [2] *Ghurar*, p. 211. [3] P. 664.
[4] *Fārs-nāma*, p. 41. [5] P. 47.
[6] *Kitāb Dīvān Lughāt al-Turk* III (Istanbul, 1335/1917), 110–11. [7] *Āthār*, 235.

found in other sources. For instance, Tha'ālibī, 213, tells us of a seven-days' formal mourning by Rustam and other warriors when the news of Siyāvush's death reached the Iranian court, and Ṭabarī (I. 604) relates that according to Persian authorities the first man to wear black in mourning was Shādūs, son of Gōdarz, who did so when Siyāvush was killed by Firāsiyāt (Afrāsiyāb).[1]

What can be deduced from literary sources about the mourning rites concerning Siyāvush seems to have found unexpected confirmation in archaeological excavations in Transoxiana. Diggings in the ruins of Panjikent, a Sogdian city sixty-eight kilometres east of Samarkand, have brought to light a series of extensive wall paintings, the focal theme of which is the mourning of men and gods for a young prince (p. 1146, fig. 3). There can be little doubt that the mourned figure is Siyāvush.[2] Similar scenes appear on a chest from Tok-Kala in the extreme north of the Āmū Daryā delta,[3] and on a vase found in Marv.[4]

From a number of references to the manner in which Siyāvush was slain, it appears that, as would befit a martyred saint, he was killed cruelly and in a way that could not but arouse deep anguish and overwhelming pity. After he was wounded, his hands were tied and he was humiliated and driven to the place where he had once excelled in physical prowess. Then he was thrown down "like a lamb" and his throat was slit with a sword. Apparently also he was mutilated and his handsome and radiant face was cut up and destroyed.[5]

Annual mourning rites for Siyāvush seem to have been closely connected with those for the dead, whose fravašis were celebrated in the day(s) immediately preceding the New Year festival. It was believed in Sasanian times that on New Year's day Siyāvush was avenged by Kai Khusrau.[6] The association of the New Year festival with both the cult of Siyāvush and the renewal of plant life may be seen as a clue to the connection of Siyāvush with the myths of the life cycle of vegetation. The cult of Siyāvush seems to have assimilated the widespread myths

[1] Cf. S. Meskūb, *Sūg-i Siyāvush*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1350/1972), p. 80 for some current vestiges.

[2] The identification was suggested first by A. Y. Yakubovskii and A. I. Terenozhkin. See A. M. Belenitski, "Nouvelles découvertes de sculptures et de peintures murales a Pianjikent", *Arts Asiatiques* v (Paris, 1958), 163–82; and G. Frumkin, *Archeology in Soviet Central Asia* (*HO* VII. 3.1, Leiden/Köln, 1970), 72, 78–9. On the Iranian divinities depicted as taking part in the mourning for Siyāvush, see G. Azarpay, "Iranian divinities in Sogdian painting", *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg* I (Acta Iranica 4, Leiden, 1975), pp. 20ff.

[3] Frumkin, *Archeology*, 101.

[4] *Ibid.*, 149.

[5] See Ṭabarī I, 600; Bal'amī, 612–13; Tha'ālibī, 211.

[6] "Māh-i Fravardīn rōz ī Khurdād", Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, p. 104, no. 20.

of the sacrifice of a vegetation deity whose career symbolized the cycle of plant life and who suffered death in order to strengthen life and promote rebirth. A trace of the ancient myths may be seen in the story that from Siyāvush's blood there immediately grew an herb called "the Blood of Siyāvush" (*khūn-i Siyāvushān*),[1] even though Afrāsiyāb had ordered his victim's blood to be shed over a barren rock.[2]

It also appears that the mourning cult of Siyāvush, a legacy of Iranian pagan times, paved the way and provided the mould for the development of the Shi'ite mourning rites in Iran which eventually led to the emergence of the *ta'ziya*.[3] Curiously, Firdausī's account of Siyāvush's murder bears striking similarity to the passion of Imām Ḥusain as depicted in Persian passion plays.[4] In both cases, an innocent holy person of exalted lineage, who has stood up for truth and righteousness, is killed by a treacherous and ruthless enemy. The passion of Siyāvush bears too close a resemblance to that of Imām Ḥusain in ritual, imagery and emotive underpinnings to be ignored in an explanation of the Islamic genre.

Kai Khusrau. Of all the Kayanian heroes, Kai Khusrau is the most highly praised in the Avesta. Whereas the fravašis of the seven Kayanian princes who preceded him are invoked together in the Farvardīn Yasht (133–5), his fravaši is celebrated separately with a string of epithets indicative of his exalted image. He is pictured as possessing the strength of a well-formed body, the Ahura-given triumph, victorious superiority and just and inviolable command. He is warlike; he triumphs over enemies with a single stroke. In possession of the farrah, he enjoys a splendid reign. Long life, good fortune and all-healing power are his. He has foreknowledge of the future. His descendants are good, clear-eyed, virtuous, eloquent, brilliant and wise. He delivers the unfortunate from distress. He is invoked to ward off the evil deeds of sorcerers and sorceresses, *kavi*s, *karpan*s and tyrants. He has inalienable right to paradise.

Kai Khusrau has a Vedic namesake, Suśravas, "of fair fame", with whose aid Indra crushes twenty enemy-chiefs and their 60,099 warriors by means of his fatal chariot wheels.[5] The supposition of an Indo-Iranian origin for Kai Khusrau, however, remains a matter of con-

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, 664, pp. 2514–15. [2] *Ibid.*, 675, p. 2391.
[3] See E. Yarshater, "The *Ta'zieh* and pre-Islamic mourning rites in Iran", in P. J. Chelkowski (ed.), *Ta'zieh, Ritual and Drama in Iran* (New York, 1979), pp. 88ff. Meskūb, *Sūg-i Siyāvush*, pp. 82, 151. [4] See *Shāh-nāma*, 622, 652.
[5] Macdonnell, *Vedic Mythology*, 64.

jecture, since as in the case of Kāvūs there is little more than a sharing of the name to unite the two.

In Yashts 15.30–3 and 19.73–7 reference is made to Kai Khusrau's chief triumph and one of the turning points of the national epic, namely, his slaying of Afrāsiyāb and Garsēvaz in the vast White Forest after a long and arduous struggle. In a number of other Yashts the scene of these events has been transferred to the banks of Lake Čaēčasta.

In the Pahlavī literature the legends of Kai Khusrau are elaborated and embroidered with various details of a religious nature. He is said to have practised the Mazdayasnian religion[1] and to have destroyed, as a Mazdean iconoclast, an image-shrine[2] on the bank of Lake Chēchast. He is credited with the founding of the famous Zoroastrian fire-temple at Chēs (Shīz): he established the Fire of Gushnasp which settled on his horse's mane to light his path when he was fighting the darkness on Mount Asnavand.[3] He also appears as one of the Immortals (apparently already implied in Yasht 23.7) with a future rôle to play at the time of the Renovation: he will help the Sōšyant in his resurrection of the dead and will join him in the final battle.[4]

The Islamic sources concentrate in particular on Kai Khusrau's release from Turan and his subsequent campaigns against Afrāsiyāb. Under his command a large number of Iranian heroes actively take the field against Afrāsiyāb and his warriors, especially those from the house of Vēsa.

Whereas the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and its like drew their material about Kai Khusrau chiefly from the heroic tradition, priestly literature used mostly non-heroic material which emphasized his religious and eschatological aspects. The account of his disappearance into the snow, together with a number of his chief warriors,[5] may be an outcome of his attribute of immortality. Kai Khusrau's disappearance marks the end of an era and the close of the most brilliant heroic cycle of the epic tradition.

Conspicuous among the Iranian warriors who fight under Kai Khusrau are Tūs, of the house of Naudhar; Gōdarz, Gēv and Bēžan of the house of Kashvād; and of course Rustam. Firdausī devotes a considerable part of the *Shāh-nāma* to the account of their exploits.

[1] *Dēnkard* IX. 16.19.

[2] Cf. M. Boyce, "Iconoclasm among the Zoroastrians" in J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at sixty* IV (Leiden, 1975), 96ff.

[3] *Dēnkard*, VII. 1.39; IX. 23.5; *Bundahishn* xviii. 12; *Mēnōg i Khrad* ii. 95; xxvii. 61.

[4] *Dēnkard* VIII. 1.40; IX. 58.10; *Mēnōg i Khrad* xxvii. 63; lvii. 7. See Christensen, *Kayanides*, 90–2, for further details on Kai Khusrau in Pahlavī books.

[5] *Shāh-nāma*, 1438ff; cf. Ṭabarī I. 618; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 104; Tha'ālibī, 243.

Before discussing the later Kayanians, we shall consider some of these paladins.

NOBLE WARRIORS UNDER THE KAYANIANS

The house of Rustam. Of all the noble warriors, Rustam stands out as by far the greatest in the pages of the *Shāh-nāma*. His parents were Zāl (also called Dastān), the vassal king of Sīstan, and Rōdāba (Rōdhāvadh in Tha'ālibī, 73ff.), a daughter of Mihrāb, the vassal king of Kabul and a descendant of Dahāk. Exaggerated features usually encountered in the life-story of legendary heroes are also met in his case. His natural birth is impeded by his unusual size, and a "Caesarian" delivery is carried out following the instructions of Sīmurgh, the miraculous bird whose magical feather heals his mother's wound. Rustam is suckled by ten nurses and, when weaned, eats food sufficient in amount for five men.[1] Even as a child he confronts and kills his father's furious white elephant which had run loose. He captures the formidable Sipand Fortress and avenges the blood of his great-grandfather Narēmān, while still a youth. He grows so strong that his feet sink into the ground as he walks, and he has to implore God to diminish his strength. Soon his fame spreads, and when after Naudhar's death the question of choosing a new ruler arises, he is sent by Zāl to bring Kai Kavād from the Alburz mountain to be king. Before he sets out, he is given his grandfather Sām's mace, which had once belonged to Karshāsp,[2] and he tames an extraordinary stallion, Rakhsh, for his mount. Soon there begins the first of a long series of battles against Afrāsiyāb, which continue through the adventurous reigns of Kāvūs and Kai Khusrau. Awesome and invincible, Rustam becomes a legend in his own time, and it is in legendary terms that he is addressed by Tahmīna, the daughter of the king of Samangān, who enters his bed-chamber one night to express her love and admiration for him. Twice he comes close to experiencing a challenger equal or superior to himself: once when he is fighting against his own son Suhrāb, whom he does not recognize, and again when he is almost overwhelmed by the young prince Isfandiyār. Yet he emerges victorious from both battles, the first time by a combination of shrewdness and strength, and the second by help from

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, 221ff. i

[2] *Shāh-nāma*, 286ff; see B. Sarkārātī, "Gurz-i niyā-yi Rustam", *Majalla-yi Dānishkada-yi Adabiyyāt-i Tabrīz* XXVII (1354/1975), 335ff.

Sīmurgh and skill in archery. Chivalrous and noble as he is, he is not entirely above employing ruse or expedience. His career is studded with a large number of single combats against warriors, demons and whole armies.

His lifetime stretches from the reign of Manūchihr to that of Bahman. He receives a special charter from Kai Khusrau at the end of his reign, but together with Gōdarz and Zāl follows the king's advice and returns from the hopeless road that Kai Khusrau is following and therefore does not disappear with the other warriors into the snow.[1] Zāl and Rustam are the only warriors of the early Kayanian period who appear also under Gushtāsp and his successor. This fact is one indication, among others, that the legends of these heroes originally formed a separate cycle, independent of the Kayanian, and that this cycle only later became intertwined with the Kayanian, resulting occasionally in some awkward juxtapositions.

Rustam and Zāl, however, are not mentioned in the Avesta, and the origin of their legends has been one of the thorny problems of the national epic. Despite the prominence given to Rustam in the epic tradition, traces of an initial hostility to him among the priesthood can be deduced from the challenge offered him by Isfandiyār, the great Zoroastrian champion, and from the revenge taken on him by Bahman, another protector of the faith, who wages war against Rustam's family and ravages his land. A tradition among some Islamic historians explicitly gives the cause of Isfandiyār's challenge as Rustam's disrespect for the good religion.[2] To have him descended from Dahāk on his mother's side is another sign of priestly antagonism. Neither he nor any of the members of his house figure in Gushtāsp's holy wars. This point further indicates the existence of a cycle of legends which developed outside Avestan circles and only later combined with Avestan epics. The absence of Rustam from the Avesta and a certain similarity between his legends and those of Karshāsp led Marquart to suggest that Rustam (Old Ir. *Raudhastakhma; Mid. Pers. Rōdstakhm; cf. the name of his mother Rōdaba)[3] might have been another name of Kərəsāspa.[4] Not only are their legends similar in many respects, but both seem to have incurred the displeasure of the priestly class through some religious offence.[5] Marquart concluded that the legends of Rustam were a

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, 1437ff.
[2] Dīnawarī, 25; *Nihāyat al-Irab*, 207.
[3] See Justi, *Namenbuch*, viii, who first suggested the connection.
[4] "Beiträge", 643.
[5] See above p. 430ff and *Dēnkard* IX. 15.3.

reshaping of those of Kərəsāspa, with influences from the life-story of Gondophares (Gundofarr < *Vinda-farna), a Saka king of Parthian lineage and a contemporary of Gōdarz II, who ruled in eastern Iran and northwestern India in the 1st century A.D. Nöldeke, however, maintained that there was no link between the two, and that the legends of Zāl and Rustam belonged originally to the early Iranians of Drangiana (Zarang) and Arachosia (Zābul).[1] Marquart's view has been followed in various ways by a number of scholars.[2] Herzfeld among them developed Marquart's theory in greater detail and connected the Saka king Gundofarr, and therefore Rustam, with the remains of the Kūh-i Khwāja in Sīstan, which he had excavated.[3] He maintained that the time-span between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., the middle part of which was occupied by Gundofarr, was the time when the Iranian saga took shape, and thus the Saka king along with many Parthian monarchs, such as Milād (Mithradates) and Gōdarz (Gotarzes), took their places in the epic cycles in the guise of Iranian paladins.[4] Christensen expressed serious doubt about the identification of Rustam with either Karshāsp or Gundofarr, pointing out that the similarity between Rustam and Karshāsp was rather superficial and that our meagre knowledge of what transpired in eastern Iran under the Saka kings did not justify identifying Rustam with Gundofarr.[5] He was inclined to agree with Nöldeke in regarding the cycle as belonging, not to the Avestan people, but to the early Iranian inhabitants of Sīstan.[6]

The difficulty about this theory is that it fails to explain the absence of Rustam from the Avesta. If legends concerning him belonged to the ancient generations of Iranians in Arachosia, the stories would have been known to the authors of the younger Avesta, since Sīstan was familiar to them and the region figures prominently in the Avesta. It might be argued that the Zoroastrian priests must have frowned upon the pagan legends of the lands that their new faith had conquered; but surely they could have shown Rustam in an unfavourable light, like many other figures of whom they disapproved. This difficulty, however, could be obviated if we assume that Rustam was indeed, as his frequent

[1] *Nationalepos*, §10.

[2] See R. von Stackelberg, "Bemerkungen zur persischen Sagengeschichte", *WZKM* XII (1898), 246, n.1; Hüsing, 172ff, 213; cf. Wikander, *Vayu*, 58, 163; Molé, "Garshasp et les Sagsār", 129.

[3] *AMI* IV (1931–2), 91ff; 114ff; *Archeological History*, 54, 75. Cf. Bailey's review of this work in *BSOS* VIII (1936), 1154–5, which implies disapproval of the theory.

[4] Herzfeld, *AMI* IV (1931–2), 113–14.

[5] *Kayanides*, 134ff.

[6] *Op. cit.*, 136ff.

title Sagzī[1] (the Saka) indicates, a Saka hero, whose legends were brought to Sīstan by the invading Saka tribes and which spread to the rest of Iran in Parthian times and eventually were combined with the Kayanian cycle as part of the national epic tradition.[2] The origin of the Rustam legends is to be sought, not in the historical events of the time of Gundofarr, but in the remoter past of the Saka people. Any similarity between Karshāsp and Rustam can be explained more plausibly by the features common to heroic legends than by assuming substitution.

It is to be noted, however, that the spread of Rustam's legends reflects marked linguistic influence from Persia. His name, Rōtastakhm, is Middle Persian (no occurrence of the name has been found in Khotanese Saka, whose literature is chiefly Buddhist and has links rather with India than ancient Iran); even the form used in the Sogdian fragment on Rustam, namely *rwstmy*, appears to be a borrowing from Persian.[3] If *Rašdama* and *Rašdakma* in the Elamite tablets from Persepolis should prove to represent the name of the Sistanian hero – a possibility raised by Gershevitch, who suggests their derivation from **rastu-taxma-*,[4] then Nöldeke's view will have found unexpected support.[5]

As a name, Rustam appears already in the *Drakht ī asūrīg*,[6] which is based on a Parthian original.[7] The first datable occurrence of Rustam's name is the Armenian *Arostom* in the 5th century A.D.[8] The legends of Rustam enjoyed great popularity during the 7th century, to judge by the number of people who bore his name.[9] But it is unlikely that the *Khwadāy-nāmag* would have given us as full an account of Rustam's legends as the one we find in Firdausī, whose prose source no doubt drew on Sistanian legends, and whose poetic imagination was attracted to them. (One of the four scholars who helped the author of the prose *Shāh-nāma* was Yazdāndād of Sīstān.[10]) The account of Rustam in early Arabic sources is more succinct,[11] and even Tha'ālibī, whose version is fairly exhaustive and conforms to Firdausī's in outline, makes no mention of the episodes relating to Suhrāb, Maniža and Bēžan, or

[1] See Herzfeld, *AMI* IV (1931–2), 115, n. 1 for references.

[2] See Boyce, "Zariadres" 474ff; *Hist. Zoroast.* I. 100–2; Sarkārātī, "Rustam", 161ff.

[3] Gershevtich, "Amber at Persepolis", 227.

[4] *Op. cit.*, 226.

[5] Although the Persian form of "Rustam" with a short *u* does not accord well with the *majhūl ō* in the Mid. Pers. form, *rwstm* (Rūstam) in 'Abd al-Qādir's Lexicon supports the *majhūl* vowel. Cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, p. 12, n.1; Gershevitch, *ibid.*

[6] Ed. M. Navvabi, 66.71.

[7] But see Christensen, *Kayanides*, 138, n. 2.

[8] Bailey, *BSOS* VIII (1937), 1154; cf. Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, p. 12, n. 2.

[9] Nöldeke, *ibid.*, 10.

[10] See Taqizadeh, "Firdausi", *Kāva* II. 3 (1921), p. 14, col. 2.

[11] Cf. Ṭabarī I. 598–604.

Rustam's "Seven Stations". On the other hand, in the story of Sīmurgh, Tha'ālibī, 367–8, has details which are lacking in the *Shāh-nāma*. The stories of Rustam's birth and youth must be later elaborations, since original poems or stories of celebration and adventure generally do not concern themselves with such details.[1] The 8th-century Sogdian fragment concerning Rustam found in the Turfan excavations attests to the wide popularity of Rustam's legends in Transoxiana. It describes a battle between Rustam and the demons, in which the latter, deceived by a stratagem devised by the warrior, suffer losses. The name of Rakhsh, Rustam's celebrated steed, is also mentioned in the fragment.[2] A further indication of the popularity of the legends of Rustam in Central Asia may be seen in the 7th-century wall-paintings of Panjikent, some of which (Room 41, Sector VI) have been identified as illustrations of Rustam's exploits in his Seven Stations (pls 145–8).[3]

The House of Gōdarz. Next to the house of Rustam, the house of Gōdarz is the most prominent among the warrior nobles in the national epic. In the *Shāh-nāma* Gōdarz's ancestry is traced to Kāva the Smith. His father Kashvād (Jashvād in Ṭabari I. 608, 617, and therefore probably to be read Gashvād),[4] who is made a son of Kāva, appears first during the reign of Frēdōn, and continues to be a warrior even under Kai Kāvūs. Ṭabari,[5] however, makes Kashvād a descendant of Naudhar through twelve generations. Kashvād is the general who leads the Iranian army back to Āmul after Naudhar's defeat and capture by Afrāsiyāb.[6] Kashvād is said to have two brothers. One is Kārēn, the general of Frēdōn's army, who not only takes part in Manūchihr's campaigns against Salm and Tūr, but leads Naudhar's army in his battle against Afrāsiyāb. The other is Qubād (Kavād), who commands the right wing of Naudhar's army in this battle and is killed by the Turanian warrior Bārmān.

Gōdarz, a veteran of many wars, is depicted in the epic tradition as a staunch warrior and a wise and respected statesman. He appears first under Kai Kāvūs, who gives him Isfahan as a domain, and he remains active to the end of Kai Khusrau's reign. When, after a challenge by Tūs, Kai Khusrau is finally assured of his accession to the throne, he

[1] H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* II, 763–4.

[2] See E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* (Paris, 1940), 134ff; E. Yarshater, "Rustam dar zabān-i sughdī", *Mihr* VII (1952), 406ff.

[3] See M. Bussagli, *Painting of Central Asia* (Geneva, 1963), 44–5; A. M. Belenitsky, *Central Asia*, (London 1969), 188 and pls. 137–8.

[4] Cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, p. 10, n. 1.

[5] I. 617f.

[6] *Shāh-nāma*, 276–7.

orders a major confrontation with Afrāsiyāb. Gōdarz leads the fateful expedition, during which many Turanian and Iranian warriors come to grief. A series of single combats called the battle of "Eleven Aspects" (*Yāzdah Rukh*), in which the Iranian warriors distinguish themselves, culminates in a combat between Gōdarz and Pīrān – a combat which ends the life of the formidable Turanian general and prepares the way for the final defeat of Afrāsiyāb.

Among Gōdarz's 78 warrior sons (70 of whom fall in the wars against Afrāsiyāb) Gēv stands out prominently; he is one of the foremost heroes of the national epic. He is the warrior who, following a prophetic dream of Gōdarz, is sent by Kāvūs to Turan to find Kai Khusrau and bring him to Iran. Gēv is equally prominent in the subsequent wars against Afrāsiyāb which lead to the latter's destruction.

Gēv's son Bēžan, also an outstanding warrior, is the hero of a well-known romance in the *Shāh-nāma*. He is led astray into Turanian lands, where Afrāsiyāb's daughter Manēža falls in love with him, but he is captured by her father and imprisoned in a pit. Eventually he is freed and brought back to Iran by his maternal grandfather Rustam through Manēža's unfailing love and loyalty.[1] The author of the *Fārs-nāma*[2] attributes to Gēv a son, Bukht Narsē, the general of the army under Luhrāsp.

The Avesta makes no mention of the house of Gōdarz, but the names of Gōdarz and Bēžan (Vījan) coincide with the names of two Parthian kings in Islamic sources.[3] Gōdarz of course appears also on coins, and the inscription of Gōdarz I in Bīsitūn includes a significant reference to the name of Gēv,[4] although not as Gōdarz's son, but as his father, Gotarzes Geopothros.[5]

Some of the powerful noble houses of Iran, most of which, by all accounts, flourished under both Parthian and Sasanian rule, seem to have influenced the development of Iranian epic tradition to the extent of having their ancestors appear as heroes of legendary times. The incorporation of such legends must have happened, at least in rudi-

[1] For the view that the story may represent an Iranian version of the Ishtar–Tammuz myth, see M. Bahar, *Asāṭīr-i Īrān* (Tehran, 1975), lviii; cf. Sarkārātī, "Rustam", 169.

[2] P. 48.

[3] See e.g. Ḥamza, 14, and below, p. 459.

[4] Gēv's name appears as Biyy in Ṭabarī I. 601, and Zavv (for Vavv) in Dīnawarī 16, and *Byb* in *Tārikh-i Qum*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭihrānī (Tehran, 1313), 69, 70, which attributes the building of a number of villages to him. But the Bīsitūn inscription assures the genuineness of the initial *g*-.

[5] See Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, 40; Marquart "Beiträge", 641; J. C. Coyajee, "The House of Gotarzes: a Chapter of Parthian History in the Shahnameh", *JASB* XXVIII (1932), 207ff.; N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia* (Chicago, 1938), 173ff. See also chap. 2, pp. 42ff and chap. 8(*a*), p. 286 in this volume on the identity of Gotarzes.

mentary form, during the Parthian period. Among the Parthian princes who are present in the national epic in the guise of warrior-heroes are Farhād (Phraates) and Mīlād (a name which, as Marquart ingeniously discovered,[1] is a form of Mihrdād = Mithradates). Three other warriors' names, Bahrām, Bēžan and Shāpūr (seen also as an eponym in Sabirghān[2] and Shāvurān[3]), also belong to this category. Although these names do not appear in Western sources for Parthian kings, they are present as those of Arsacid rulers in the lists recorded by Islamic historians,[4] and presumably they belonged to members of some eastern branches of the dynasty.

The legends of the house of Gōdarz must have been included in the national saga earlier than those of the Sīstanian heroes, as Christensen argued.[5] Despite the preeminence of Rustam during Kāvūs's reign, it is Gōdarz and his sons who are most effective in bringing Afrāsiyāb to his final defeat and destruction. It is Gēv who, as noted above, is sent to bring Kai Khusrau from Turan to Iran; in the fateful battle against Afrāsiyāb, it is Gōdarz to whom Kai Khusrau entrusts the Kāviyān banner, borne until then only by princes of the royal house; and it is Gēv who eventually delivers Afrāsiyāb into the hands of Kai Khusrau.

It may be objected that the occurrence of Parthian royal names in the legends could be due to the adoption of such names by the Parthian kings from epic tradition. Nöldeke answered this objection long ago. If that were the case, he pointed out,[6] then the Parthian kings would no doubt have chosen only the names of kings, instead of choosing those of their vassals. The legends of such heroes, then, presumably originated in the stories composed and sung by the minstrels of the Parthian princes, who through their patronage aided their wide circulation. In the course of time, as some of the legends were forgotten and others were blurred through a weakening of oral transmission, the Kayanian and Parthian cycles were mingled in the narration of the east-Iranian bards and minstrels[7] and eventually became part of the national history.

Gōdarz then is probably Gōdarz I (*c.* 91–81 B.C.), even though it is Gōdares II (A.D. 43–51 ?), a champion of north-eastern Iranian lands, who had particular links with Hyrcania,[8] to which he withdrew more than once, according to classical sources.

[1] "Beiträge", 633ff; Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, p. 7, n.2.
[2] Ṭabarī I. 614.
[3] *Shāh-nāma*, 317, passim.
[4] For a comparative table of these lists, see Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* III. 194.
[5] *Kayanides*, 139ff.
[6] *Nationalepos*, §8.
[7] Cf. M. Boyce, "Zariadres and Zarēr", *BSOAS* XVII (1955), 473f.
[8] See A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften* III (Leipzig, 1892), 42ff; Debevoise, *History of Parthia*, 166ff and p. 41 ff in the present volume.

We cannot attach too much importance to the genealogy of Gōdarz as it appears in the national epic, since such genealogies tend to become confused, as time passes, with attention focusing on the dramatic elements of the stories. Thus, for example, Sāsān instead of Pāpak is made the father of Ardashīr in the *Kārnāmag* and the *Shāh-nāma*, and in Daniel (5. 31; 6.1–29; 9.1; 11.1) Cyrus is made a successor of Darius "the Mede", son of Xerxes (Ahashwerosh).[1] Another example of such confusion is provided by the replacement of Zariadres by Gushtāsp in their famous love story (see below, p. 468). It is probable that Gēv originally appeared in the epic as Gōdarz's father. His leadership rather than Gōdarz's in bringing back Kai Khusrau from Turan may be a trace of his seniority. He lives on to the end of Kai Khusrau's time and with Rustam, Tūs and Gōdarz is among the few who receive a charter (*'ahd*) of special privileges from Kai Khusrau upon his retirement from the throne.[2] It is also to be noted that only Gēv, from his house, figures among the Zoroastrian Immortals.[3] It is possible, on the other hand, that Gēv, son of Gōdarz, was named after his grandfather and their legends became mixed.[4]

The House of Naudhar. Of this princely house which is prominent in the Avesta and counts Vishtāspa and his wife Hutaosā among its members (Yasht 5.98), only one figure stands out in the national epic, namely Tūs. He is mentioned in the Avesta several times and therefore his legends are of considerable antiquity. In the Ābān Yasht, 53 and 55, he offers worship to Arədvī Sūrā and asks for victory over his enemies, the descendants of Vaēsaka (Vēsa, father of Pīrān and the uncle of Afrāsiyāb). In the priestly Pahlavī literature he is one of the thirty Immortals who help the Sōšyant at the end of time to renovate the world.[5] In the *Shāh-nāma*, although he is depicted as a prince and a warrior of the highest rank, traces of a less sympathetic treatment than that accorded to the houses of Rustam and Gōdarz are evident.

Upon the death of their father Naudhar, Tūs and his brother Gustahm (Av. Vistaura ?) are considered by the other nobles to lack the farrah and therefore to be not wholly suitable for the throne. Thus Zāb is chosen king instead. Under Kāvūs, Tūs is involved in a number of dramatic

[1] Cf. Birūnī, *al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdī* I (Hyderabad, 1373/1954), 154; *Āthār*, 89; ibn Baṭriq, *Annals*, 48.
[2] *Shāh-nāma*, 1429.
[3] See Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* II. 638, n. 125 and Christensen, *Kayanides*, 153ff.
[4] Cf. Mīlād b. Jurjīn and Jurjīn b. Mīlād, p. 476 below.
[5] *Dēnkard* IX. 23.6; *Dādastān i Dēnīg* xxxvi.3. See Christensen, *Kayanides*, 153ff.

events. When Kai Khusrau is brought from Turan, Tūs briefly challenges his right to the throne and falls out with Gōdarz and Gēv. He acquiesces in Kai Khusrau's accession only after he himself fails where Kai Khusrau succeeds, namely in the capture of the Bahman Fortress, a test of worthiness which Kāvūs had set for the claimants to the throne.[1]

After his accession, Kai Khusrau prepares a great expedition against Turan, with Tūs as its leader. Haughty and over-confident, Tūs ignores Kai Khusrau's specific instructions to avoid Furūd, the king's half-brother, on the way and in the resulting combat Furūd is killed. This deeply grieves Kai Khusrau. Later, when the news reaches him that a surprise attack by Pīrān has inflicted heavy losses on the Iranian army, he gives vent to his anger in a scathing message and deposes Tūs, installing Farīburz, his own uncle, as the leader of the expedition. At times Tūs is shown to exhibit some of the arrogance and thoughtlessness of Kāvūs. His relations with the houses of Gōdarz and Rustam, which are joined by marriage and are very well disposed toward each other, are sometimes less than cordial.[2] Nöldeke pointed out[3] that the dispute between Tūs and Gōdarz may reflect a rivalry between two powerful Parthian noble houses. It is not inconceivable that at some point Tūs's legends were "edited" by bards who were sympathetic to his rivals. Yet he remains a respected figure in the national epic and is among the noble warriors who receive a special charter from Kai Khusrau when he prepares to relinquish his kingship. He is among the warriors who disappear in the snow as they follow Kai Khusrau into the wilderness.

ASPECTS OF THE KAYANIAN EPIC CYCLE

The Kayanian epic cycle embodies the literature of the most notable heroic age in the Iranian tradition. This literature must have originated in poetry celebrating the exploits and adventures of Kayanian princes and sung by the minstrels attached to their courts. Although we have no historical or corroborative evidence for the events of the period and cannot be sure of the date or exact homeland of the Kayanians, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the core of their deeds as related in the Avesta, and much later, in the *Shāh-nāma*. The comparative study of heroic literature[4] affords us an insight into the millieu, nature and transmission of their legends.

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, pp. 750ff. [2] *Shāh-nāma*, pp. 466, 752. [3] *Nationalepos*, §8.

[4] As presented notably by H. M. and N. K. Chadwick in *The Growth of Literature*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1932–40).

The Kayanian epic cycle, as depicted in the Yashts, portrays a society in which a class of princes and their warrior-nobles are dominant, and kingship is firmly established and institutionalized. The tribal ties and loyalties are weakened enough to allow allegiance to kings, who rise above parochial bonds and who represent Ērān as a community of peoples sharing a common ideology and threatened by a common danger, namely periodic attacks from the north. Moreover, the deities worshipped by the society have long ceased to be tribal or local, but are highly anthropomorphic gods, universally recognized.[1] Worship of the souls of the dead has also ceased to be merely a family or clan cult; instead, the fravašis have come to represent a universalized body of powerful spirits who can be appealed to by all.

We do not know what physical or economic challenges or human circumstances gave rise to the Kayanian heroic age. H. M. Chadwick has advanced the theory that heroic periods are generally periods of national movement and unrest touched off among barbaric and "adolescent" peoples by contact with more civilized nations, and often preceded by the mercenary service of the primitive under the more advanced.[2] Such conditions do not seem to be implausible in the case of the ancestors of the Avestan nation. We may speculate that the forefathers of the Avestan people received an early stimulus when they came into contact with the prior inhabitants of north-eastern Iran, whose higher culture is reflected in the archaeological finds of the region. Before the penetration and eventual conquest of the area by the invaders, we may assume, there was a turbulent period dominated by warrior princes and nobles, whose predatory and defensive measures, and whose interaction with neighbouring tribes, are mirrored in the Kayanian cycle. It is wholly possible, of course, that the original heroic poems which celebrated the deeds of the Kayanians represented a more primitive stage of social and political development than the one depicted in the Yashts and that they belonged to a more tribal than national community; even so there is no doubt that the Kayanian saga is expressive of a heroic period which must have led to a more cohesive and united community with national aspirations.

Already in the Avesta, poetic exaggeration endows the Kayanian princes with greater wealth and power than they are likely to have enjoyed. The later versions of their stories, exemplified by the

[1] Cf. H. M. Chadwick, *Heroic Age*, 423.

[2] *Heroic Age*, 439ff; *Growth of Literature* III. 737ff.

Shāh-nāma, enhance this trend and give them all the pomp and circumstance that the splendour of the Sasanian court could evoke in the minds of their authors. We may safely surmise that humbler conditions actually prevailed[1] and that cattle-raids, plunder and pillage were the main economic causes of strife.[2] The blood-feuds only aggravated a tense situation. This view receives support from Zoroaster's own words, for in his Gāthās he bitterly complains of the inroads of the bloodthirsty wicked men who give no peace to herdsmen and their cattle and keep the good man in peril.[3]

In the Kayanian epic cycle the features common to heroic literature in general may be observed. The heroes are distinguished primarily by their prowess at arms and their physical strength. Their main concern is fame and glory, which are acquired chiefly on the battlefield through courage and skill. In the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, which in this respect tends to reflect archaic conditions, most of the heroic exploits of the Kayanian period are performed by warrior nobles, and more often than not the king is depicted as the commander-in-chief and an able general who inspires and leads his army. In the Yashts, however, the Kayanians appear in a more primitive state of society than in the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and are personally active against their enemies, exhibiting more warlike qualities than later kings. This is also true of some of the earlier kings, notably Frēdōn and Manūchihr, who overcome their adversaries personally.

The Kayanian epic cycle, having arisen originally among warrior princes for purposes of celebration and entertainment, exhibits the expected aristocratic traits. The stories are generally of war and adventure. The scenes of the stories are mostly battlefields, royal courts, banquet halls, hunting grounds, roads, rivers, mountains and forests. The prevalent form of warfare is single combat, in which the heroes prove their worth. The combat is generally preceded by boasting on the part of each warrior. Pride in one's ancestry, past achievements and superiority over one's opponents, together with denigration and ridicule of one's adversary, are the common subjects of such conceits.

The weapons used vary from the primitive mace (*gurz*) and lance (*naiza*), to the lasso (*kamand*), bow and arrow (*tīr u kamān*), sword (*tigh*, *shamshīr*), dagger (*khanjar*), javelin (*khisht*) and dart (*zūbīn*). Defensive

[1] Cf. Boyce, "Some remarks", 46, n. 4.

[2] Cf. *Growth of Literature* III. 731–2; *Mujmal*, 48, mentions a raid by Afrāsiyāb for a herd of horses.

[3] Yasnas 29.9; 31.18; 48.11. See also Boyce, *ibid.*

weapons consist of the shield (*sipar*), coat of mail (*zirih*) and horse armour (*bargustuvān*), but obviously some of these weapons, particularly those of metal, reflect advances achieved in later periods.

Generally the warriors fight, or begin to fight, on horseback, unless the terrain or situation requires combat on foot. Before an army sets out for battle, as a rule the king opens up his treasures and distributes weapons and ammunition. He often tries to arouse his men before battle. Appeal is made to their pride, their sense of glory and their manliness. The need of the country and the danger of defeat to the land and the crown are brought home to the soldiers in stirring words. Challenges to combat, offered or received, and the ensuing battles are described at length. Battles engaging the whole body of an army usually take place generally in desperation or following inconclusive single combats, or in punitive forays, or else as a response to a general attack. Banquet scenes in celebration of victory abound. Drinking bouts are still more common and require little excuse. Victory is often followed by distribution of booty, with the king or general rewarding his warriors.

Unlike the Indian and Teutonic heroic literatures, which often accord a more prominent place to women than to men,[1] the Kayanian epic cycle seems to show less concern for women than even the *Iliad*. In the *Shāh-nāma*, several women are conspicuous in the course of the Kayanian history: the wicked *Sūdāba*, Kai Kāvūs's spouse, whose accusation of the innocent prince Siyāvush eventually leads to his tragic death; Farangīs, the unfortunate wife of Siyāvush and daughter of Afrāsiyāb, who barely escapes death by order of her father and has to bring up her son Kai Khusrau in concealment; Rōdāba, the beloved of Zāl and the heroine of the most moving love story in the *Shāh-nāma*, who gives birth to Rustam; Sindukht, the resourceful mother of Rōdāba; the valiant Gurdāfrīd, the daughter of the Iranian general Gaždaham, who skilfully if briefly battles with the young Suhrāb, and outwits the admiring warrior by her crafty escape; Manēža, a daughter of Afrāsiyāb, and a paragon of love and loyalty; and finally Humāy, the successor of Bahman. Three of these women, however, belong, not to the Kayanian, but to the Rustam cycle; and Manēža may have, like her lover Bēžan, a Parthian provenance (see below p. 459). The Avesta mentions practically none of these women. On the other hand it is to be noted that Arədvī Sūrā, the female yazad of the waters has a prominent place in the

[1] See *Growth of Literature*, III. 738–9.

Yashts, and Aši the yazad of reward, blessing and fortune, who is depicted in one Yasht (13. 107) as a noble, invincible maiden, is one of the major Iranian deities venerated also in the Gāthās.[1] In the Farvardin Yasht the fravašis of a number of women are invoked alongside those of men (see p. 414 above).

The intervention of supernatural powers is common in the cycle, as it is in the heroic stories of other nations. The heroes sacrifice to the deities and the fravašis and ask for power and victory. The farrah is an ever-present agent of divine aid and grace. Dragons and monsters are recurrent adversaries. Dreams are generally taken as forecasts of future events and their interpretation is diligently sought. The involvement of the deities and other supernatural powers, although itself of a mythical nature, need not affect our view that such stories generally have a basis in reality. Such interventions are common to other heroic literatures[2] and derive partly from the beliefs of the period and partly from the imagination of the narrators of the stories.

THE SECOND KAYANIAN PERIOD

This phase begins with Luhrāsp; with new characters and a new set of circumstances, it has a complexion wholly different from that of the previous phase, even though the *Khwadāy-nāmag* made Luhrāsp a direct successor of Kai Khusrau.

Luhrāsp (Av. Aurvat.aspa). The gap between Kai Khusrau's era and that of the later Kayanian kings is clearly indicated by the genealogy of Luhrāsp. Luhrāsp's name does not appear in the Gāthās, but he is mentioned in the Ābān Yasht, 105, as the father of Vištāspa. *Aurvat.aspa* ("having swift horses") also occurs in the Avesta as an epithet of Hvar, the sun yazad, and of Apam Napąt, the yazad of the waters and an *ahura*. The name appears on Kushān coins, in the form of Arooaspo, as a designation of the sun-god.[3] All this has led a number of scholars to see a sun deity at Luhrāsp's origin.[4] The fact that he is mentioned neither in the Farvardīn Yasht nor in the Zamyād Yasht, where the possessors of the farrah are enumerated, may mean that he was not originally favoured by the composers of the Yashts. The reference in Islamic

[1] See Gray, "Foundations", 62ff.

[2] See *Growth of Literature* III. 746, 758ff.

[3] Justi, *Namenbuch*, 41.

[4] F. Spiegel, "Awestâ und Shâhnâme", *ZDMG* XLV (1891), pp. 196ff; Herzfeld, "Zarathustra iii; Der awestische Vistaspa", *AMI* I (1929–30), 170ff. See Boyce "Zariadres", 464ff. for a discussion of this view.

sources to his retiring to Nau Bihār (a Buddhist temple) in Balkh may indicate his resistance to the Zoroastrian faith. It may even be suspected that his retirement from the throne was forced. It may also be speculated that later, however, the sanctity of his son restored him to the favour of the Zoroastrian priesthood as a righteous or at least an innocuous king.

The Pahlavī and Islamic sources give Luhrāsp's genealogy somewhat varying forms, but no doubt the version in the *Bundahishn*,[1] to which those given by Ṭabarī I. 645, 813, and Ḥamza, 36, basically conform, is that which must have appeared in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. According to this lineage Luhrāsp is a distant cousin of Kai Khusrau, namely son of Kai Ōjī (or Ōzī or Ōgī), son of Kai Manūsh, son of Kai Pīšīn, son of Kai Apīvēh, son of Kai Kavād.[2] In later sources we find him a just and righteous king closely associated with Balkh. He is said to have founded this city, and Bīrūnī mentions Balkhī ("of Balkh") as his title.[3] According to Islamic sources he sends his general Bukhtnaṣṣar (Nebukadnesser) to Jerusalem, which he destroys and where he makes prisoners of the Jews.[4] The fact that Nebukadnesser is given a Persian name, Bukhtarshah, in a number of sources,[5] suggests that this attribution may derive from Sasanian times through an acquaintance with Babylonian and Jewish traditions rather than from the Islamic period.

Gushtāsp (Av. Vištāspa; Mid. Pers. Vishtāsp) is mentioned four times in the Gāthās by the prophet, who calls him his follower and ally (Yasna 46.14). He is also mentioned frequently in the Yashts. From Yasht 5.98 it can be inferred that, like his wife Hutaosā, he is of the house of Naotara (Pers. Naudhar). Although Yasht 13.102 seems to imply otherwise, his being a Naotarian is confirmed by the summary of the *Varshtmānsar Nask* in the *Dēnkard* IX. 33.5. He sacrifices to the river yazad Arəvdī Sūrā in front of Lake Frazdānu (Yasht 5.108–9), asking for victory over his enemies Tathryāvant, Pəšana and Arəjat.aspa (Arjāsp). He asks a similar favour from Drvāspa, the yazad who protects cattle (Yasht 9.29–31). In Yasht 13.99–100, he is called the valiant promoter of truth through the power of his mighty mace, and the arm, support and saviour of the religion. He possesses the farrah and defeats his enemies, liberating the Ahuric religion (Yasht 19.84–7). Two late texts, namely

[1] XXV. 34, but read Ozān instead of Uzāv.
[2] Cf. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 104.
[3] *Ibid.*; see also Ṭabarī I. 645.
[4] Ṭabarī I. 645; Ḥamza, 36; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 121–2; Maqdisī III. 149; Tha'ālibī, 224; Bīrūnī, *loc. cit.*
[5] Tha'ālibī, *ibid.*; Ṭabarī I. 650–1; in the *Fars-nāma*, 48, Bukhtnarsē.

the *Āfrīn ī Zardusht* and the Vishtāsp Yasht (Yashts 23 and 24), record Zoroaster's blessings on the king and the prophet's advice and admonitions to him. The tenth nask of the Avesta, which, according to the *Dēnkard* VIII. 10, was called the *Vishtāsp Sāst* ("Instructions to Vishtāsp"), is, however, lost. The Farvardīn Yasht, 96–129, has preserved the names of the members of the family of the prophet and of Vištāspa.

The Pahlavī literature adds many details about the conversion of Vishtāsp and his religious wars. The Holy Immortals and the Fire of Ohrmazd urge him to accept and promote the faith;[1] he founds the two well-known fires of Farnbāgh and Burzēn Mihr. During the battle with his arch-foe Arjāsp, the king of the Chionites (Mid. Pers. *Hyon*), the Kōmis mountain breaks up in order to help save the Iranian army (*Dēnkard* IX. 35–6). His two sons, Spandyād and Pishōtan, embark on holy wars in the west and east.

The *Khwadāy-nāmag*, however, presented Gushtāsp in a different light. There he appeared as an ambitious prince who fell in love with and married Katāyūn,[2] daughter of the emperor of Rūm. Eventually, his father having retired, Gushtāsp succeeds to the throne. After Gushtāsp has ruled for 30 years, Zoroaster, a native of Āzarbāijān, appears at his court and converts him to his religion. The king's conversion leads to a series of wars with Arjāsp, in which the Iranian and Turanian heroes – Isfandiyār and Bastūr in particular – excel and which end with the victory of Gushtāsp's army. Gushtāsp's selfishness and his unsavoury character now reveal themselves: first he imprisons his valiant son Isfandiyār on unfounded charges and then in niggardly fashion denies him the crown which he had promised him for defeating Arjāsp; he asks him instead to bring Rustam in fetters to the court, callously sending his son into the jaws of death.

Of relevance to the study of Gushtāsp's origin and character is a story quoted by Athenaeus[3] from Chares of Mytilene, who was in the service of Alexander the Great. Briefly stated, the story relates that Hystaspes ruled in Media and the lands below it, while his younger brother Zariadres reigned in the lands above the Caspian gates up to the Tanaïs. Beyond the Tanaïs, Omartes is king. His daughter Odatis is said to be the most beautiful maiden in Asia. Zariadres and Odatis

[1] *Dēnkard* VII., 1.41, 47; 4.1; IX. 24.17; 39.22; *Zand ī Vahman Yasht* ii. 58, 60; *Mēnōg ī Khrad* xiii. 14–15.

[2] Also called Nāhīd according to Daqīqī; see *Shāh-nāma*, p. 1497.

[3] *Deipnosophistae* XIII. 575.

fall in love with eath other through visionary dreams, but Omartes refuses to give his daughter in marriage to a stranger. At a wedding banquet which Omartes holds for his daughter, he asks Odatis to offer a cup of wine to the man of her choice. Zariadres, forewarned, has crossed the Tanaïs in haste and arrives in Scythian attire just in time to receive the cup and carry off the princess. The two brothers in the story are said to be offspring of Aphrodite and Adonis; this descent has prompted speculation among scholars concerning the Iranian equivalents of these Greek deities, and also the interpretation of the story on a mythological plane.[1] Mary Boyce has drawn attention to the possible cultic aspects of the story, since, according to Chares, scenes from it adorned the walls of temples, palaces and even private residences.

It is generally assumed that the Greek story inspired the account of the romance between Gushtāsp and Katāyūn related by Firdausī[2] and Tha'ālibī.[3] In this version, the young Gushtāsp leaves his father's court for Rūm, where incognito he attends a feast given by the emperor to permit his daughter to choose her future husband. She catches sight of Gushtāsp, whom she has seen in her dreams, and places her diadem on his head, thus indicating her choice. Christensen,[4] following Marquart,[5] saw in the story of Zariadres a reflection of eastern legends in the west, but Mary Boyce argues[6] that it would be more reasonable to take the legend as a western one, which later was appended in a modified and rather crude form to the life story of the young Gushtāsp. According to her, in the eastern version Gushtāsp replaces Zariadres, whose name coalesces in a later period with Zarēr, Gushtāsp's younger brother.

It is hardly possible to suppose that the Hystaspes and Zariadres of Chares and the Gushtāsp and Zarēr of eastern legends are identical by mere coincidence. The solution which suggests itself is that the legend had its origin in the earlier, pre-Zoroastrian Iranian myths shared by eastern and western Iranians alike. This would require us to postulate that in Gushtāsp of the national history we are faced with two distinct persons merged into one, namely a mythological figure, son of Aurvat. aspa (Luhrāsp), and a Kayanian prince, the protector of Zoroaster. What strengthens this theory is that, as we noted earlier (above, p. 467), there are in the account of Gushtāsp clear indications of two different charac-

[1] Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* I. 665, n. 1; "Awestâ und Shâhnâme", pp. 196ff; Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* III. lxxxff.; Herzfeld, "Zarathustra iii", 170–80; for a comprehensive treatment of the subject see Boyce, "Zariadres".

[2] Pp. 1457ff.

[3] Pp. 245–53.

[4] *Gestes*, 136.

[5] *Untersuchungen* I. 21, n. 91.

[6] *Op. cit.*, 469.

ters, one, a saintly king and the other, a rather self-seeking ruler. It is hard to believe that a tradition which developed among the Zoroastrians could portray the first protector of the faith as a character with so many unsavoury traits as the Gushtāsp of the secular legends. The problem can easily be resolved if we see in Gushtāsp a union of two persons, one belonging to a pre-Zoroastrian fund of mythical figures, where moral concerns did not play a significant rôle, and the other belonging to the religious history of eastern Iran. Although the two eventually merged, probably through a similarity of names, when the national legends were systematized and put in order, the differences in character and deeds were to a large extent preserved through oral tradition.

Isfandiyār. Of Gushtāsp's sons, two are particularly prominent. One is Pishōtan (Av. Pəšō.tanū), who is called deathless (*amahrka*) in the Vishtāsp Yasht, 4, and who is one of the Zoroastrian Immortals living in Kang-Dēz and a future helper of the Sōšyant. The other is Isfandiyār (Av. Spənto.dāta),[1] who is mentioned in the Farvardīn Yasht, 103, and Vishtāsp Yasht, 25. He is praised in the Pahlavī books as the champion and a staunch defender of the good religion,[2] but he looms much larger in the national epic on account of his exploits, in particular his famous contest with Rustam, and his tragic death. The lengthy treatment of him by Firdausī and Tha'ālibī must ultimately be based on a Middle Persian epic. The intermediate source may be either the *Bunkish*, said by Mas'ūdī[3] to contain legends about him, or the *Sakīsarān* ("the Chiefs of the Sakas"?), which, according to Mas'ūdī[4] related, among others, the exploits of Rustam and Isfandiyār; or even the *Kitāb Rustam wa Isfandiyār*, translated by Jabala ibn Sālim and mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm (305) among works of biography and fiction. Some legends about Isfandiyār, notably his capture of Rō'īn Dēz ("Brazen Fortress") and a number of his exploits at the "Seven Stations" (*Haft Khwān*), may possibly have served as models for similar exploits attributed to Rustam.[5] Both are in fact based on stereotyped elements and show a typical pattern used in such heroic stories (e.g. the slaying of a dragon and the killing of a sorceress disguised as an enchantress; "seven" as the number of adventures involved, etc.). M. Bahār has drawn an

[1] Isfandyādh in Dīnawarī, 28, 82 and *Nihāyat al-irab*, 206ff; cf. Yāqūt I. 351.

[2] See *Škand-gumānīk Vičār*, ed. J. de Menasce, (Fribourg-en-Suisse, 1945), x. 67.

[3] *Murūj* II. 40. [4] *Ibid.*, 118.

[5] See Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, § 30; Christensen, *Kayanides*, 140ff; Molé, "Garshāsp et les Sagsār", 131, n. 12; for the opposite view see Spiegel, *Erân. Alterth.* I. 714ff. and Wikander, *Vayu*, 162.

interesting parallel between the epic of Rustam and Isfandiyār and that of Achilles and Hector, comparing Gushtāsp with Agamemnon and suggesting that the Iranian legend was an adaptation of the Homeric model during the period of cultural interaction among the Greeks and eastern Iranians after Alexander's conquest.[1] Although the fact that Rustam, unlike Hector, is not killed (even though almost defeated) by his antagonist remains a weakness in this comparison, Greek influence in some aspects of the legend cannot perhaps be entirely ruled out.

An intriguing report by Ctesias (*Pers.*, 2. 10) calls the usurper who seized the throne after Cambyses' death Sphendadates (Isfandiyār). This Median name, which corresponds to the Avestan form, raises the question whether the legends of Isfandiyār did not owe something to myths or events of western Iran. Marquart suggested an ancient cult of Spəntō.dāta in the West,[2] partly on the basis of the identification of the Khazar god T'angri Khan with a figure which according to a late source "the Persians call Aspandiat".[3] But the evidence is too meagre to be conclusive.[4]

Legends about Isfandiyār must have gained in popularity and attracted extraneous material in the compositions of Parthian bards. The Arsacids traced their descent to him, as did the Sasanians. Ṭabarī[5] calls him *al-Fahlavīy* "the Parthian".

THE THIRD KAYANIAN PERIOD

In the Islamic sources the account of this phase presents a confused mixture of elements from eastern and western sources. Memories of the events which took place under the Achaemenians are reflected in these accounts, mostly filtered through Greek, Babylonian and Judaic materials and often in distorted form.[6] The redaction of this section of the national history is comparatively late, some of it even post-Sasanian.

Bahman, although not mentioned in the Avesta, is a popular figure in the Pahlavī literature. In a passage in the *Zand ī Vahman Yasht*[7] Ohrmazd shows Zoroaster a vision of the favoured future kings in the form of a tree. Gushtāsp and Bahman are likened to gold and silver

[1] *Asāṭīr-i Īrān*, lviiiff.

[2] "Iberer und Hyrkanier", *Caucasica* VIII (Leipzig, 1931), 87–8.

[3] *The history of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranç̣i* [Kałankatuaçi], tr. C. J. F. Dowsett (London Oriental Series 8, Oxford, 1961), p. 156 (II.40).

[4] See Boyce, "Zariadres", 473, n. 4.

[5] I. 683.

[6] See E. Yarshater, "List of Achaemenid Kings in Bīrūnī and Bar Hebraeus", *Bīrūnī Symposium* (Columbia University, New York, 1976), 52f.

[7] iii. 20–9.

branches, respectively, whereas the other kings, namely the Parthian Balāsh, Ardashīr Pāpagān, Bahrām Gōr, and Khusrau I, are represented by inferior metals. The *Dēnkard* VIII. 7.5 refers to "Bahman the Just" and "the most efficient figure in the Mazdayasnian community". Gardīzī calls him the best of all Persian kings.[1] Most probably he represents a local ruler of the Zoroastrian community after Gushtāsp. Later, however, it appears that elements from the surviving memory of Achaemenian kings, Cyrus in particular, were attached to legends about Bahman. He is said to have built a number of cities in Babylonia and Mēsān,[2] having freed the Jews from captivity in Babylon, having restored the Temple in Jerusalem,[3] and having adopted Judaism for a while.[4] According to Ḥamza, 38, the Israelites identified Bahman with Cyrus in their histories. Bahman's identification with Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464–424 B.C.) is based, as Nöldeke points out,[5] on a pseudo-scholarly confusion by Syriac writers using Greek sources. Bīrūnī actually records[6] the Greek form of the title "Longimanus" (*mqrwšr*, Gk. μακροχειρ).

Bahman's daughter Humāy (Mid. Pers. Humāg)[7] is generally identified, at least in name, with Humāyā,[8] a daughter of Vištāspa, whose fravaši is celebrated in Yasht 13.139, while Yasht 9.29 implies that she was taken prisoner, together with her sister, by Arjāsp. The *Shāh-nāma* elaborates upon the episode[9] and recounts their deliverance by Isfandiyār when he captures Rō'īn Dēz. Thus Firdausī knows two Humāys, one is Gushtāsp's daughter, whose hand Gushtāsp promises at one point to anyone who will volunteer to avenge Zarēr's blood,[10] and who later becomes a prisoner of the Turanians; the other is Bahman's daughter and wife, who has the title of Chihr-āzād ("of noble birth") in Islamic sources and about whom the Avesta furnishes no information. The story of Humāy's abandoning her infant son Dārā in the water, of his being brought up by a laundress, and of his then finding his way to the court and finally making his claim to the throne is a variation on a familiar legend found repeatedly within and outside Iran. The account of her reign in Islamic sources shows the same admixture of reports that we

[1] P. 15; cf. Dīnawarī, 29–30, Ṭabarī I. 687.
[2] Ṭabarī I. 686–7; Ḥamza, 37–8; Tha'ālibī, 173.
[3] Dīnawarī, 29; *Mujmal*, 30.
[4] Ya'qūbī, 29.
[5] *Ṭabari*, 3, n. 1.
[6] *Āthār*, 111.
[7] Khumānī in Ṭabarī I. 654 etc. and most other Arabic sources; Humāya in Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 129; Khumāy in Tha'ālibī, 389ff.
[8] Bartholomae, 1834.
[9] Pp. 1560, 1613.
[10] *Shāh-nāma*, 1755ff; cf. *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*, 11.

find in the case of Bahman. Humāy is said to have fought many battles against Greece (Rūm) and to have had Greek prisoners build lofty monuments in Stakhr, resembling those of Rūm.[1] Ḥamza[2] identifies the monuments with *hazār sutūn* ("a thousand columns", i.e. the Persepolis complex).[3] Gardīzī (15) says that she transferred the capital from Balkh to Ctesiphon. Her next-of-kin marriage (*khwēdōdah*) to Bahman,[4] however, reflects an attested old custom. Ḥamza[5] calls Humāy Shamīran (Semiramis?) also, and Wilhelm Eilers has included Humāy among a series of legendary women whose life stories echo in part the legend of Semiramis.[6]

With the two Dārās we come closer to historical figures. Dārā I (the Great) shows some aspects of Darius I's rule. Gardīzī (16) records a number of administrative reforms by Dārā which are reminiscent of those of Darius. His main rôle in the Iranian tradition, however, is to sire Dārā II and Alexander, and thus provide a link between the Iranian royal house and Alexander: Dārā marries the daughter of the king of Rūm, but finding her to have bad breath, sends her back to Rūm, where she gives birth to Alexander. The groundwork for this legend and the legends of Alexander as they appear in Iranian tradition was provided by the adaptations of the romance by the pseudo-Callisthenes, a fictional account of Alexander which was translated into Middle Persian towards the end of the Sasanian period.[7] It is unlikely, however, that much of this fiction would have found its way into the *Khwadāy-nāmag* itself, since Zoroastrian antagonism towards Alexander was strong.[8] In secular literature, however, considerable elements of his legends must have become popular already in pre-Islamic times. A Syriac translation made from the Middle Persian adaptation of the pseudo-Callisthenes exists. This translation was later rendered into Arabic and then into Persian. No doubt it contributed to an increase in Alexander's popularity as a national hero, particularly since a modification in the original story now characterized Alexander as a son of Dārā I and a half-brother of Dārā II.

Islamic sources give a fairly full account of Alexander legends based on the pseudo-Callisthenes,[9] a fact which indicates that the two aspects of Alexander's story were current side by side in Sasanian times. This

[1] Ṭabari I. 690. [2] P. 38. [3] See also *Mujmal*, 30.
[4] *Shāh-nāma*, 1755f. [5] P. 38.
[6] *Semiramis*, 59. [7] See Nöldeke, *Alexanderroman*, 14ff; *Nationalepos*, § 15.
[8] Cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos* § 15.
[9] Ṭabarī I. 693ff; Ḥamza, 39–40; Tha'ālibī, 399ff; Ibn al-Balkhī, 57–8; *Mujmal*, 61; Dīnawarī, 31ff; *Nihāyat al-irab*, 213ff.

should not surprise us. A parallel may be seen in the dichotomy of feeling in Iran today over the Arab conquest, and also in the fact that many Persians have named their sons after Chingiz and Hulagu, the Mongol conquerors of Iran.

The later Kayanian kings are all heroes of popular legends and folk romances in which Iranian, Greek and Islamic elements are discernible. Among these are two lengthy folk epics of love and war, the *Dārāb-nāma* and the *Fīrūzshāh-nāma*,[1] based on oral traditions. Humāy, Dārā, Alexander, Dārā's sons Fīrūzshāh and Dārā's daughter Rōshanak are among their chief personae.

III

HISTORICAL PERIODS IN THE NATIONAL TRADITION

THE ARSACIDS

Arsacid history was almost passed over altogether in the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. Consequently, the account of these kings is very brief in all the Islamic sources. Firdausī[2] states that he has heard only their names, and winds up their entire history in 20 lines. Their period was regarded as one of disunity and chaos, when a number of petty kings ruled and the fortunes of the Iranians were at low ebb. Ḥamza[3] practically declares it the dark age of Iranian history, when "no one cared to acquire knowledge or wisdom", until Ardashīr arose. The "Letter of Tansar" goes much further and in a spiteful indictment of the Arsacids calls their period a time when the world was full of fiends and beasts in human shape, with no culture or education, and when nothing but corruption and ruin emerged. The cities turned into deserts and cultivation into waste.[4] This disparagement is set in contrast to a glowing picture of Ardashīr's well-organized and cohesive empire.

There is no doubt that Parthian history was neglected and distorted as a consequence of Sasanian antagonism. This antagonism is clear not only from the derogatory tone of the accounts derived from Sasanian royal circles about the nature of Arsacid rule,[5] but also from the account given of the extermination of the Arsacids at the hand of the early Sasanians. According to a tradition cited by Ṭabarī (I. 823), when Ardashīr and Shāpūr I became king, they eradicated the Arsacids in

[1] See Z. Safa (ed.), *Dārāb-nāma-yi Ṭarsūsī* I (Tehran, 1344/1965), pp. xiiiff; W. Hanaway, *Love and War* (New York, 1974), pp. 4ff., 12ff.

[2] P. 1923.

[3] P. 23.

[4] *Nāma-yi Tansar*, 39.

[5] See *Nāma-yi Tansar*, 40, 42; Ṭabarī I. 814; Ḥamza, 22, 23.

fulfilment of a vow by their ancestor Sāsān, son of Dārā, to the effect that if he should become king he would not leave a single Arsacid alive. Sasanian propaganda described the Arsacid rule as the product of Alexander's insidious design and a disaster to Iranian sovereignty. It presented the Sasanians, in particular Ardashīr, on the other hand, as champions of national unity and restorers of past glories. Of course, Ardashīr did not in actual fact break with the Parthian norms so abruptly. The great inscription of Shāpūr I at Kaʿba-yi Zardusht does not confirm an all-out effort by either Ardashīr or Shāpūr to centralize political and military power. On the contrary, the dignitaries of the great houses who were prominent during Parthian times joined the Sasanian court, and the titles of the provincial kings were preserved, although now borne mostly by Sasanian princes.

The exaggerated contrast noted above must belong largely to the time of Khusrau I and his father Kavād, and echoes their attempt at effecting a more tightly organized governmental structure, with the king of kings grasping the reins of power firmly, while the authority of the nobility was curtailed. To impart authority to his policies, Khusrau attributed them, as the "Letter of Tansar" shows, to Ardashīr and transferred opposite practices to the Arsacids. This view of the Arsacids must have been emphasized even further after Khusrau II as a defensive measure against the prevailing political chaos and repeated challenges to the central authority of the Sasanian state. It is also probable that Bahrām Chōbīn, by reviving through his rebellion the spectre of Arsacid legitimacy, contributed to a more negative view of the Arsacids. In Firdausī's account[1] of his challenge Bahrām argues fervently for the right to the throne of the Arsacids, to whom he traces his own descent, pointing to the questionable lineage and the decadence of the Sasanians. Even though the story of Bahrām as it appears in the *Shāh-nāma* is fictionalized, such arguments cannot but reflect the actual position that Bahrām had taken. The authors of the latest version of the *Ḳhwadāy-nāmag* under Yazdgird III had therefore more than one reason to slight the history of the Arsacids and vilify their policies, particularly since Yazdgird was a grandson of Khusrau II, who had been challenged by Bahrām.

The view that the account of the Arsacids in official Sasanian circles took a particularly negative turn after Hurmazd IV, although more favourable accounts of them existed earlier, gains credence with the

[1] *Shāh-nāma*, 2695, 2701.

testimony of vestiges of Arsacid history as understood in Parthian times. One such testimony is their genealogy, which is variously traced to Dārā,[1] Isfandiyār,[2] Kai Kavād,[3] Ash son of Siyāvush,[4] and Ārish the Bowman (of the time of Manūchihr).[5] Such a line of descent can hardly be attributed to the Sasanian genealogists, who were less than anxious to prove Arsacid legitimacy. It must, therefore, derive from the Parthian period.

Other evidence is the commonly benign treatment of individual Arsacid kings in Islamic sources. Tha'ālibī depicts them generally as just and valiant. Interestingly, he says of Afqūr Shāh (Pakores)[6] that he recovered the Kāviyān banner and took good care of it. Seeking to avenge Dārā's blood, he fought against Rūm, killed many Rūmīs and levelled many of their fortresses. He returned to Iran what Alexander had taken away in medicine, astronomy and philosophy. The *Bundahishn* (xxxv. 8) calls the Arsacids the practitioners of righteous rule (*ašō-xwatāyīh*). The tradition preserved in the *Dēnkard* (IV. 24) regarding the collection of Avestan texts during the Parthian period under Vologeses (Balāsh) is another indication that the Parthians were viewed favourably. Contrary to what we find in the "Letter of Tansar", the author of the *Nihāyat al-irab* relates a tradition according to which the Arsacids (*Mulūk al-ṭawā'if*) "were eager after wisdom and culture, and . . . in their time were written the books of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, *Sindbād*, *Luhrāsf* . . ."[7] In the "History of Qum" we find the building of a fairly large number of villages and townships attributed to Arsacid princes, among them Mīlād b. Jurjīn, Kai b. Mīlād, Bahrām b. Jūdarz (Gōdarz) and Jurjīn b. Mīlād.[8] Tha'ālibī (458ff.) relates a number of anecdotes and entertaining stories about the Arsacid kings that he says he found in his sources. They must generally derive from oral traditions of Parthian times.

Again, contrary to reports of the rooting out of the Arsacid family, we find a number of Arsacid nobles in positions of prominence in Sasanian times. One is the powerful chief minister (*buzurg farmadhār*) under Yazdgird I and Bahrām V, Mihr Narsē, whose descent is traced by Ṭabari to Kai Ashak.[9] Another is Bahrām Chōbīn, as already noted.[10]

[1] Ṭabarī I. 704, 709; Ḥamza, 21; Bīrūnī, 115, 117; Tha'ālibī 457; *Mujmal*, 59.
[2] Ṭabarī I. 708. [3] *Ibid.*, 709.
[4] *Ibid.*, 710; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* II. 136; Bīrūnī, 113; Tha'ālibī, 457.
[5] *Shāh-nāma*, 2695 (by implication of Bahrām Chōbīn's claim).
[6] In the text, Aqfūr. [7] P. 216. [8] *Tārīkh-i Qum*, 65, 66, 69–82, 84, 85.
[9] I. 869; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, 109, n. 1. [10] *Shāh-nāma*, p. 2695.

The lists of Arsacid kings in Islamic sources are confused and curtailed. The longest, given by Ḥamza[1] on the authority of Bahrām b. Mardānshāh, a Mōbad of Fārs, contains fifteen names; the shortest, by Firdausī,[2] consists of nine. Although these lists in Islamic sources include the names of some known Arsacid kings, such as Ashk, Balāsh, Gōdarz and Ardavān, they do not conform to the list of the main Arsacid branch as known from coins and classical sources. Most probably in the Islamic sources the names of the dynasts from different Arsacid branches have been mingled, many others having fallen into oblivion. The regnal years are even less trustworthy, ranging between a total of 499 years[3] and 244.[4]

Although the historical tradition has kept very little of Arsacid factual history, the deeds of a number of Arsacid princes are mirrored, as was noted above (pp. 458f), in the heroic stories of the national epic. Were we better informed about events in eastern Iran in Parthian times, we should probably have found a good many of them echoed by the adventures of Iranian kings and nobles as told by Firdausī.

Next to the Kayanian, the Parthian period must be counted as the most important heroic age, prompting much heroic literature. Opportune princely patronage fostered this literature, but its survival for long centuries and through Sasanian times must be attributed in large measure to its vigour and literary quality.

THE SASANIANS

The accounts of the early Sasanians in Islamic and Pahlavī sources are less detailed and factual than is to be expected of a dynasty which kept records at court and had a well-developed scribal and administrative system. In the extant accounts of the kings the entertaining, rhetorical and moralizing elements outnumber those of historical fact and objective detail. Stories and legends are told at every turn. One notable exception is the objective account of Ardashīr, the founder of the dynasty, particularly that of his early career, as given by Ṭabarī (I. 814ff.). Ṭabarī's account is probably not taken from the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, because his version does not occur with such detail in other early Islamic sources, nor is it entirely complimentary. Read carefully, it depicts Pāpag as an ambitious ingrate, and Ardashīr as a usurper in his own house. It stands in sharp contrast to the romanticized and highly

[1] P. 14. [2] *Loc. cit.* [3] Ṭabarī I. 710–11. [4] *Ibid.*, 706–7.

favourable account of the *Kārnāmag*. Ṭabarī's account is most probably based on an independent history of Ardashīr which found its way into Islamic tradition.

The history of the relations between Iran and Rome and their wars during the reigns of the early Sasanian kings is often cursory, rhetorical and laden with fiction and whimsical tales. The Armenian question never finds an adequate statement, the treatment of the problem of minorities is haphazard, and the wars of succession before Shāpūr II, notably between Bahrām III and Narsē, are practically ignored.

With Yazdgird I, the information given about each king becomes generally more factual, and yet the facts are somewhat selective. A balanced account of events with the necessary dates and details, or a clear analysis of policy, motives and personalities, is missing. Instead, we are treated to a selective picture of significant occurrences. Details of foreign policy and incidents which are devoid of narrative interest or entertainment potential were apparently omitted from the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. So were details of administration and military logistics. Pageantry, on the other hand, provides a major topic. The coronation of kings, their throne-addresses, scenes of banqueting, merrymaking and the hunt, the reception or dispatch of envoys, military reviews, arrays of arms and equipment, and gifts received or bestowed are described vividly. (See above pp. 402ff for a reflection of Sasanian conditions in the national history.)

The Sasanian historical tradition continued in both oral and written form after the invasion of the Arab armies and afforded the people a measure of pride and solace when their fortunes were overcast. In the 9th and 10th centuries, under the aegis of the Saffarids and the Samanids, Persian versions of the national history, in both prose and verse, emerged. By giving it a magnificent and enduring expression, Firdausī provided his compatriots with a superb instrument of national identity, as well as a source of inspiration for the troubled centuries to come.

PART IV

IRAN AND HER NEIGHBOURS

As a power which dominated many lands, influenced many cultures, and was receptive in turn to their impact, the place of Iran in world history and her contribution to world culture can be understood only in the light of her exchanges with the societies and the friendly or rival powers which surrounded her.

Achaemenian Iran owed much in cultural terms to the Mesopotamian, Elamite, Anatolian and Egyptian civilizations, among others, and their heritage continued in an Iranianized form in the Parthian and Sasanian periods. In the wake of Alexander's conquest a strong wave of Hellenism swept over the Iranian territories. Later, however, the Iranian native culture and nationalism asserted themselves and under the aegis of the Arsacid and Sasanian dynasties Iran brought to bear a strong cultural impact on many of her neighbours, but more particularly on the peoples who lived partially or totally under her suzerainty. At the same time it drew strength from the energies and contributions of these peoples, and benefitted by contact with adjoining societies. Loanwords often provide the most readily noticeable expression of cultural exchanges and borrowings.

The nature and effects of Hellenism in Iran are explored in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 8*a*, 19, 22 and 28, and in the Introduction. Relations with India are discussed in Chapters 5, 7, 22 and 26. The interactions with China, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, Rome, Byzantium, the Arabs and the Turks are treated in this section. Although the political contacts have been indicated, it is the cultural exchanges which are emphasized. Editor.

CHAPTER II

IRAN AND MESOPOTAMIA

In 539 B.C. Cyrus peacefully took possession of Babylon, and the kingdom of Iranian peoples, taken over by the Achaemenian dynasty from the Medes, expanded to become the first real world-empire of ancient history. It is true that the overthrow of Croesus and his Lydian kingdom, sealed by the conquest of Sardis in 546 B.C., had already made the region of Asia Minor subject to the Persians; but it was the thrust down into the southerly regions of the Tigris and Euphrates which gave Cyrus and the Iranian state supranational significance through control of most of the known world. This region was the ancient centre of cuneiform culture which since the third millennium had permeated the whole of the Near East from eastern Anatolia and the Syrian–Palestinian coast to the high valleys of the Zagros mountains and the low-lying plains of Susa. It was here that people from the eastern mountains – Hurrians and Kassites – had already married into the Mesopotamian city and temple culture, setting upon it the stamp of their national idiosyncrasies. This area had from time to time been the arena of political confrontations, in which now Babylonians, now Assyrians had fought for hegemony over the neighbouring peoples. Now Cyrus was pressing into Babylon, as all after him would do whose ambition was to be sole rulers over the east, such as Alexander and the Seleucids, whose historical importance ebbed out only with their loss of Babylon and Assyria to the Arsacids. For the Sasanians, too, the lowlands of Iraq constituted the heart of their dominions, and when this heart finally fell a prey to the onslaught of Muslim armies, their rule over the east likewise was broken.

Thus Iraq, in spite of seeming to lie so far west of the region of Iranian settlement, belongs rather to Īrān itself than to "Anīrān", as Sasanian documents describe non-Iranian areas of the empire. The name al-ʿIrāq, for all its Arabic appearance, is derived from Middle Persian *erāgh* "lowlands". From the time of the Medes the political centre of gravity of Iran had lain in the west; it was here that all important cultural development had taken place, whereas in the east the art of writing was unknown, with the seeming outstanding exception of the Avesta; but even this exception occurred only after Maz-

daism had reached the civilized west, where its canonical compositions were noted down much later.

Of the four residences of the Achaemenians named by Herodotus – Ecbatana, Pasargadae or Persepolis, Susa and Babylon – the last was maintained as their most important capital, the fixed winter quarters, the central office of bureaucracy, exchanged only in the heat of summer for some cool spot in the highlands. Under the Seleucids and the Parthians the site of the Mesopotamian capital moved a little to the north on the Tigris – to Seleucia and Ctesiphon. It is indeed symbolic that these new foundations were built from the bricks of ancient Babylon, just as later Baghdad, a little further upstream, was built out of the ruins of the Sasanian double city of al-Madā'in.

When Alexander the Great at last halted his victorious march, which led him as far as the Indus, the eastern frontier of the Achaemenian kingdom, and set his face once again towards the west, he saw as the final goal of his desires the rebuilding of Babylon, whose monuments and mighty temples (É-sagila) he wanted to bring to life again; west and east were to merge into a vast empire, and Babylon would be the capital of the world. The "wedding of the ten thousand" was a symbolic act directed towards this end. Alexander's early death (323 B.C.) brought all these designs to nothing. When Seleucus I Nicator (321–281) set himself up as ruler of the east, first to fall within his dominion were the satrapies of Babylon and, in 317 B.C., the Susan satrapies of Elam and Khūzistān as well. After the reconquest of Iran, in 306 B.C. he proclaimed himself *βασιλεύς*, and after his victory at Ipsos in Phrygia (301 B.C.) he added the provinces of Syria, Armenia and Mesopotamia, as well as parts of Cappadocia and Cilicia. Next to Alexander, Seleucus was the most important founder of cities; we know of no less than nine places that bear his name, the most distinguished of which is Seleucia on the right bank of the Tigris, north of Babylon and south of Baghdad. This new Babylonian capital quickly developed to become the most important trading emporium of the Hellenized Achaemenian empire. Although frequently destroyed in later times, especially under the Parthians as a result of wars with the Romans, it yet maintained its importance until supplanted under the 'Abbasids (from A.D. 750) by Baghdad.

Babylon continued to be the centre of this Asiatic empire under the Macedonian successors of Seleucus, the most important among whom

were Antiochus I Soter (281–63), who kept the empire going after his father's murder, and Antiochus III (The Great) Kallinikos (222–187). Not until the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (176–63), were the Seleucids to forfeit the main territory of Babylon. Antiochus died after a forlorn battle against the Parthians in the Persian Tabai. The residue of the Seleucid empire, limited to Syria, was made a Roman province by Pompey.

It was the Parthian Mithradates I (174–36), the sixth to bear the name Arsaces, who finally succeeded in incorporating east and north-west Iran into his empire, and with consolidated strength pressed into the land of the two rivers. From 144 B.C. Babylon became Parthian.

In the beginning the Arsacids ruled over the eastern Caspian region with Hyrcania at its centre and having Nisā and Hecatompylos as capitals. Soon, however, Ctesiphon on the Tigris opposite the Greek Seleucia became the capital of this new Iranian state. By the middle of the 2nd century B.C. the centre of gravity of the Parthian empire had shifted to Mesopotamia, and, apart from occasional encroachment on one side or the other, the Euphrates formed Iran's true western frontier, until the end of the Sasanian period in the 7th century. Just as the traditional residences of the Achaemenians in the highlands (Pasargadae, Persepolis and the Median Ecbatana) were soon ousted by Susa and Babylon, so now the lowland Ctesiphon was to take over as metropolis from Hecatompylos and Nisā in the old Parthian country.

It is true that Ctesiphon was repeatedly conquered by the Romans; these, however, were merely brief episodes with no enduring consequences: they were Roman reprisals for Parthian predatory excursions. And while the Romans fought with the Parthians for centuries over Armenia, or were forced constantly to defend their frontier along the Syrian desert, in the end Iraq remained under Parthian rule. It must have been specially galling for the Romans to realize that it was impossible for them to protect their guard-posts by a territory reaching further into Mesopotamia. This fact they learned in 53 B.C. at Carrhae when, led by Crassus, the eagles of the legions – accustomed to victory – were captured by Orodes I. Carrhae is the ancient Ḥarrān of upper Mesopotamia, a city celebrated as a shrine of moon-worship. The legionary eagles were finally returned by Phraates IV (37–2 B.C.) as the price of release from the intrigues of Roman-sponsored rivals to the throne.

Meanwhile a development of decisive political importance had been going on. Under the Assyrians the Arabs had already been making their influence felt. This development of Arab influence was in fact the start of that great migration of tribes, which continued the preceding Aramaean infiltration, and reached its climax in the expansion of Islam. From the south, desert people pressed into civilized Palestine and Syria and also along the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Whereas the ancient caravan city of Palmyra (Tadmor of the Bible) had been a bulwark for the Romans against invading Arab tribes and, even more, against pillaging Parthians, a similar fortress was built up in northern Iraq from the Arsacid side. This was the city of Hatra (al-Ḥaḍr) to the west of ancient Assur, a fortified commercial centre like the later Ḥīra. The ruins of the desert city of Hatra are impressive. They display walls fortified by towers, and a great square in the centre where once stood the palace and the temple. There was no fire-cult there, as was originally believed. The temple was dedicated to local gods, especially to the sun-god Šamaš. But the masks which decorate the exterior walls of the temple are in an unmistakably Iranian idiom.[1] The emperor Trajan, who marched triumphantly into Babylonia and reached the Persian Gulf, tried on his return to take Hatra, but in vain. Similarly Septimius Severus, who at first was victorious against Vologeses IV, was unable to capture Hatra (A.D. 197), although the Romans had already made Mesopotamia into a province with capitals at Edessa and Nisibis.

Just as at an earlier date (530 B.C.) Cyrus the Achaemenian had defeated his Median overlord Astyages and finally taken possession of his capital of Ecbatana (Hamadān), so from Persis, the province of Fārs, came the Sasanian Ardashīr and set himself upon the throne of Artabanus (Ardavān V), the last of the Arsacids. The latter was defeated and killed in the plain of Hormizdagān in Khuzistān. By A.D. 226 Ctesiphon, the capital, was in Ardashīr's power.

Thus dominion over Iran again fell to a Persian from the south-west, while the Medes and Arsacids joined in the government from the north-west. Even the novelish story of the usurpation of power by Ardashīr and the overthrow of Ardavān resembles in essential features the romantic tale of Cyrus and the dethronement of Astyages (550 B.C.).

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 37; H. von Gall, "Zur figuralen Architekturplastik des grossen Tempels von Hatra", *Baghdader Mitteilungen* v (Berlin, 1970), 7–32.

In Persis we are on the ground of ancient Elam, more precisely on the mountains of Anshan itself and so nearer to the fertile and civilized region of Sumer and Babylon. With the capture of Ctesiphon (A.D. 226), Ardashīr I (224–40) gained possession of Babylonia and along with it the claim to world-historic importance. Ardashīr celebrated his victory over Ardavān in several rock-reliefs,[1] in which Iranian religion, too, found fresh expression.

No less lustrous a kingly personality do we see in Shāpūr I (241–71), of whom we possess not only many rock-reliefs, but the longest extant Sasanian inscription which, as foundation charter of several imperial fire temples, provides both an account of his campaigns in the west and also of the high officials who administered the empire – a kind of *notitia dignitatum*. The military section reaches its high point in the report of the battles at Edessa in upper Mesopotamia, in which the Roman emperor Valerian was taken prisoner (A.D. 260), an incident repeatedly recorded on Shāpūr's rock-reliefs.

Shāpūr II (310–79) built a moat in Iraq as protection against raids by desert Arabs; he also rebuilt the armoury at Anbār in central Iraq (near Ḥīra), naming it Pērōz-Shāpūr. At first Shāpūr II suffered defeats at Ctesiphon and elsewhere at the hands of the emperor Julian the Apostate, but in the end he was able to force the famished Roman army to retreat. The emperor Julian died of a wound received in battle, in Iraq in A.D. 363, and his successor Jovian was compelled to agree to the evacuation of important Roman strongholds in Mesopotamia such as Nisibis and Singara, and Rome had now to give up all ambitions in the direction of Armenia as well.

During the reign of Shāpūr II, a strong supporter of the Mazdayasnian religion, Christians were persecuted as enemies of the state. Since the time of Shāpūr III (383–8) there came to be a catholicos of Seleucia, but not until the reign of Yazdgard I (399–422) was Christian public worship permitted (A.D. 409).

Bahrām V (420–39), nicknamed Gōr,[2] overcame incipient rebellion with the aid of Arabian mounted tribes. He had been educated in Ḥīra in Babylonia by Arabs, and there are even Arabic poems attributed to him. In his day Persian Christians began to break their links with their Syrian brethren in the west, and, protected by the Persian crown, to

[1] W. Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 115ff, with excellent pictures.

[2] O. Hansen, "Tocharisch-iranische Beziehungen", *ZDMG* XCIV (1940), 161ff.

form their own Iranian church. This separation was a political move of the Sasanians, designed to break the traditional tie between the Christian subjects of the Persian empire and Byzantium in the west.

Under Khusrau I (531–79) the Sasanian empire reached its final zenith. In the war with the eastern Roman empire Antioch was conquered (A.D. 540) and its inhabitants were settled in a southern Babylonian city, which was named Veh-Antiyūk. Some of the Neo-Platonists, driven from Athens by Justinian after the closure of the Academy, seem to have carried on their work for a brief spell in the newly founded university of Gundēshāpūr in Khūzistān.

Khusrau II Parvīz (590–628) succeeded in conquering almost the whole eastern Roman empire including Egypt. But as he was drawn up before Byzantium, the military genius, later to become the emperor Heraclius (610–41), attacked him in the rear, which extended far into Armenia and Mesopotamia. After the battle of Nineveh Khusrau II marched back to his residence of Dastagird, north-east of Ba'qūba; there he was murdered by his son Shērōy, who had the support of the generals. The short-lived Shērōy succeeded in making a peace of convenience with Heraclius, according to which the old frontiers of the two exhausted empires were re-established.

In 632, amid a general state of anarchy, the last of the Sasanian kings, Yazdgard III, mounted the throne. In the same year Muḥammad died, and the Arab commander-in-chief Khālid b. al-Walīd with his bedouin warriors had already occupied the marshes of south Babylonia. The Persians were defeated in three battles: first at Qādisiyya near Kūfa in A.D. 637, then in the same year near Jalūlā (modern Jalaula near Khānaqīn on the Iraq–Persian border) and finally in A.D. 642 at Nihāvand (in Media, south of Hamadān), so that the Muslims not only kept firm hold on the land of the two rivers, but were able to prepare for a further advance into the Iranian highlands. The conquest of Ctesiphon and Babylonia made the Arabs the masters of the Near East.

During the thousand years that had passed since the end of the Achaemenian empire, the face of civilized Mesopotamia had undergone considerable change. Compared with the ancient oriental period, the great prosperity, still extravagantly acclaimed by Herodotus, had undoubtedly declined. Babylonia was still a land of agriculture and of commerce; but famous cities such as Babylon or the Assyrian residences had visibly decayed; destroyed by wars, the temples, once

the centre and the adornment of a city, were no longer, or very seldom being rebuilt. Rivers had changed course and moved away from the townships and the canals had become silted up. This had led to the founding of new townships, which grew up often from military encampments. These flourished rapidly behind the stout walls which protected the inhabitants from increasing nomadic activity. In place of the Amorite and Aramaean attacks of old, they now faced an Arab threat from the desert. Let us give a brief sketch of a few of these new foundations.

There is, for example, Charax Spasinou on the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab, once thought to have been close to Khurramshahr; most probably, however, it was situated further north.[1] Charax was the capital of the region of Mesēnē and was known as Karəkā də-Mēšān. The sonorous Greek equivalent was "the Palisaded Encampment of Spasines", and the surrounding district was called the Characene. It was here, in the ancient "land of the sea", that the local prince Hyspaosines, son of Sagdodonacus, and undoubtedly an Iranian, set up his chief residence in 129 B.C. The place had previously been named Antiocheia by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–64). Originally it had been called Alexandria, after a garrison placed by Alexander the Great at the mouth of the Pasitigris (the modern Kārūn). Hyspaosines' successors likewise all bore Persian names such as Tiraios and Artabazos, and a certain Obadas Frataphernes is mentioned as late as A.D. 166.[2]

The history of al-Ḥira is substantially more modern. It lay in the south near Kūfa between the Nahr Hindīya and the Nahr Najaf. The place was settled by tribes from 'Umān and southern Arabia and formed the front line of Persian defence against the bedouin. This explains its originally Aramaic name Ḥērtā də-Ṭaiyāyē meaning "the tent encampment of Ṭai" – a tribal name denoting Arabs in general.[3] It was composed of forts, including gardens and fields, encircled by walls and towers. In A.D. 195 the kingdom of Ḥīra was founded by Nu'mān I, the "leader of the Persians", and it endured until almost the close of the Sasanian era, when Khusrau II (590–627) overthrew the Lakhmid dynasty and placed a Persian governor over the city of Ḥīra. Ḥīra was governed by Āzādbeh in A.D. 633, in which year it was conquered by Khālid b. al-Walīd. It was from Ḥīra as a base that Abū Bakr and

[1] J. Hansman, "Charax and the Karkeh", *IA* VII (Miscellanea in honour of R. Ghirshman, 1970), 21–58; H. J. Nissen, "Südbabylonien in parthischer und sassanidischer Zeit", *ZDMG*, Suppl. I 3 (1969), pp. 1036ff.

[2] See further pp. 310ff on Characene.

[3] Syr. *Ṭaiyāyē* "Arab"; Mid. Pers. *Tāẓīk*; Pers. *Tāẓī*.

'Umar successfully attacked Mesopotamia, as a prelude to the overthrow of the Sasanian empire. The inhabitants of the city were cosmopolitan in outlook and composed of diverse elements: heathen Arab, deriving from the very earliest days of the city's existence; Sasanian Persian, by virtue of its feudal relationship to the sovereign lords of Ctesiphon; and Byzantine Christian, by virtue of its being the see of a bishop and the springboard of the Nestorian missions to Arabia. A tomb inscription in al-Namāra indicates that Imra' al-Qais, a Lakhmid prince, became a Christian; and Dair Hind near Ḥīra was, as the name indicates, a monastery, endowed by a Lakhmid princess.[1] According to the documents, Mundhir III (503–54), being a heathen Arab, sacrificed the son of his adversary to Aphrodite, i.e. to al-'Uzzā, the Arabian Venus. The city survived assault and conquest by the Kinda, and Mundhir III even killed the bedouin prince Ḥārith b. 'Amr. In the 6th century Ḥīra was twice conquered and laid waste by the factious Ghassānids, who fought on the side of the Romans; but each time it recovered. Not until Khusrau II had besieged the city and deposed and executed Nu'mān III did the city's glory come to an end. Today the ruins of the palace of Khawarnaq (a Persian name) still bear witness to that glory.[2] Very quickly Ḥīra was overshadowed and finally completely eclipsed by the Muslim cities of Kūfa and Baṣra.

The capital of Babylon and hence the metropolis of the whole empire was no longer sited, as Babylon had been, on the Euphrates; it had moved north to the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the Hellenistic Seleucia, and it now bore the Graecized form Ctesiphon[3] of the Iranian "Tēspōn".[4] The precise meaning of the name – shared by a fortress near Marv – is unknown. Later Ctesiphon was to be renamed with one of the many *Veh* compounds: Veh-Kavāt meaning "good Kavāt/Qubād".[5] The Arabs called the Sasanian capital al-Madā'in, the

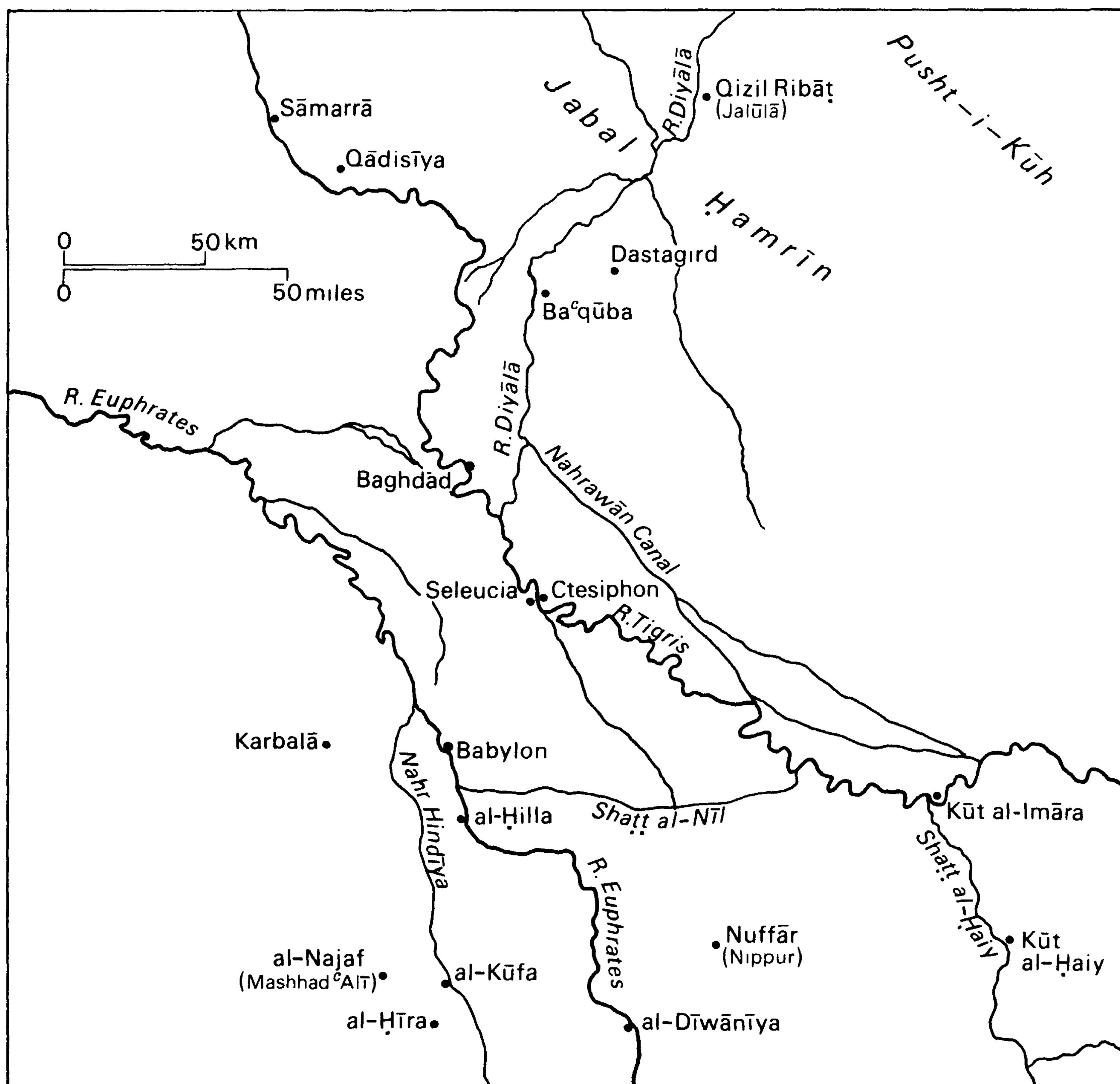
[1] More exactly, Hind was the wife of the Lakhmid al Mundhir III and mother of the kings 'Amr (*c.* 554–69) and Qābūs (569–73). The latter name is Iranian. Data according to K. Vollers, "Die Geschichte des Mutalammis", *Beiträge zur Assyriologie* v (Leipzig, 1906), 149ff, esp. 152.

[2] Meissner, *Von Babylon nach den Ruinen von Ḥīra und Ḫuarnaq*.

[3] Streck, "Seleucia und Ktesiphon", pp. 1–64; Kühnel, "Die Ausgrabungen von Ktesiphon", pp. 45ff; *idem*, "Die Ergebnisse der zweiten Ktesiphon-Expedition (Winter 1931/32)", pp. 441–2; *idem*, *Die Ausgrabungen der zweiten Ktesiphon-Expedition (Winter 1931/32)*.

[4] Mid. Pers. *Tyspwn*, Armen. Tisbon, known as Thesiphonta urbem to Aurelius Victor, Caes. 38, 3 (Carus A.D. 283), as Ṭaisaqūn (in error for °fūn) or as Ṭaisfūn(aj) to the Arabs and occurring in the *Shāh-nāma* of Firdausī as Ṭaisafūn.

[5] *Wyḥkw'tȳ* on a clay bulla of Qaṣr-i-Abū Naṣr at Shīrāz.



Map 8. Central Babylonia.

Aramaeans Māḥōzē, both meaning "the cities" in the plural, and not, as one might have supposed of the double city of Seleucia–Ctesiphon, in the dual. The name must have denoted the merging together of a group of several townships, a genuine multiple *synoikismos*, as the Greeks call it.

About thirty-two kilometres south of Baghdad stand the imposing ruins of the great palace of the rulers, the date of the building of which is still undecided. This is known as the Ṭāq-i-Kisrā, a long façade adorned with half-pillars, interrupted in the centre by an enormous east-facing doorway-arch, the *aivān*, 37 metres high and 27 metres broad, the largest intact brick arch in existence (pl. 83). In this throne-room all the governors of the empire assembled before the sovereign. There were two adjoining barrel-vaults; the one on the right (north) was brought down by the flooding of the Tigris in 1909.

Ctesiphon's fortunes as a city had been most varied. Twice it had been taken by the emperor Trajan; it had even been burned to the ground in the reign of Vologeses III; it had been conquered in A.D. 162 by the legate Verus, and pillaged in A.D. 197 by Septimius Severus; it was plundered by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in A.D. 628; finally it was pillaged afresh by an Arab onslaught under the caliph 'Umar, to disappear for ever from history (A.D. 637). Not a vestige remains of another building, the "white palace", about one kilometre north of the Ṭāq. It was the desire of the caliph Manṣūr (745–75) that all traces of Ctesiphon be totally obliterated when he selected the more northerly Baghdad for his residence. According to tradition, however, his Persian counsellor, the Barmakid Khālid, prevented his desire from being carried out.

The name Baghdad is Iranian; originally it is a man's name, Bagadāta (Armenian Bagarat), which means "given by God" or "created by God"; and later it is transferred to the place, signifying "township of B". The existence of some such name is in fact documented in cuneiform records, and it is attached to ^{uru}*Bīt*^{m} *Ba-ga-'-da-a-ti*, an Achaemenian town in the time of Artaxerxes I (465–25 B.C.). But this town was located near ancient Nippur – modern Tell Niffar/Nuffar north-east of Dīwānīya. And the place called *Bāgdā(t)* in the Talmud must likewise be sought elsewhere.[1] Probably there were other properties or estates in Iraq belonging to the same or another Iranian noble bearing this common name, and near the later Baghdad. Such estates, as mentioned in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, are called *dasākir* in Arabic – the plural of *daskara* – which is ultimately a borrowing from Old Persian *dasta-karta* "hand-made". For this reason Dastgird is a common place-name all over Iran. There was a famous Dastajird north-east of Ba'qūba in Iraq; to distinguish it from others, it was called Dastajird al-Malik, "the Dastgird of the king", because it was here that Khusrau II had taken up residence. After repeated destructions it still remained an important city in Islamic times.[2]

For our final example we take Hatra in the north. The impressive ruins of this city lie north-west of ancient Assur and west of the river Tharthār (174 kilometres from Mosul along the present motorway).[3] In a sense Hatra, as a fortified base for Arab warring tribes, was the counterpart of Ḥīra in the south. But whereas the latter word originally

[1] W. Eilers, "Der Name Demawend", *ArOr* XXII (1954), 329; *idem, Der alte Name des persischen Neujahrsfestes* (Wiesbaden, 1953), pp. 4^1, 5^1, 37.

[2] See the article "Daskara" by A. A. Duri in *Enc. Islam*².

[3] Andrae, *Hatra* I.

denoted a temporary encampment of nomads, al-Ḥaḍr by contrast denotes a township that was meant to be permanent (Arabic *ḥaḍar* "settled population", *ḥaḍāra* "sedentariness"). At the time when Hatra appeared in history, it faced Roman garrisons in Commagene and Osroene as well as in Palmyra. The six-kilometre wall, forming an almost complete circle, and having a ditch (Persian *khandaq*) outside, is fortified with towers, and encloses a huge square with palace and temple buildings. The imposing masses of square hewn stone are adorned with cornices and medallion-like reliefs of the city gods (pl. 33 (*a*)–(*c*)).

Twice Hatra was besieged, but in vain. The first unsuccessful siege was mounted by the emperor Trajan on his return from Ctesiphon (A.D. 116), the second by Septimius Severus, whose army eventually began to mutiny in the face of the brave defenders of the city, and forced their commander to retreat (A.D. 198).[1] Shāpūr I (241–72) was the first to succeed in conquering the city, after it had traitorously joined the Romans (A.D. 250). On this occasion Hatra was so thoroughly razed that Arab geographers of the Middle Ages were no longer sure of its location.

Of the rulers of Hatra whose names we know, King Barsemius deserves mention.[2] With his troop of cavalry he fell upon Septimius Severus' legions and set their siege-engines alight with naphtha. Another prince of Hatra was Sanaṭrūq,[3] after whom the city was called Ḥaṭr(ā) də-Sanaṭrū(q).[4] His name in Arabic became Sāṭirūn, and he is supposed to be identical with Ḍaizān, the last ruler of the city. A legend persists concerning his daughter Naḍīra. It is said that when Shāpūr I was besieging the city she fell in love with him and secretly gave him entry into the city. And so, in the popular imagination of later generations, Hatra was the proud city that fell, a sacrifice on the altar of love.

In the long tradition of the cuneiform culture of Babylonia, which

[1] T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* v (10th ed., Berlin, 1927), 411.

[2] Βαρσήμιος from the name of the god Bar-Ba'(al)-šəmīn. Cf. R. Degen, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* xxix (Leiden, 1972), 213b.

[3] A common name of a ruler, but not before the Parthian period. Greek form Σανατρούκης, Σανατρούκιος; see F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), pp. 282ff; cf. P. J. Dashian *WZKM* iv (1890), pp. 144–60; J. Marquart *ZDMG* xlix (1895), pp. 651, 653; H. Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik* i (Leipzig, 1897), p. 72, no. 162. W. Henning interpreted the name as the Iranian* *sāna-taru-ka-* "enemy-conquering" ("Mitteliranisch", p. 41, n. 1). For what it is worth we suggest that it might be an Iranian *-uk* development from the Aram. Talmud *sanṭū(ā)*, σενάτωρ *senator*.

[4] G. Hoffmann, "Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer", *AKM* vii, 3 (1880), 184ff; A. Caquot *Syria* xxix (1952), p. 112 n. 2.

often proved capable of adapting itself to new things (the Kassite period is a typical example), the empire of the Achaemenians marked an important turning-point, evidenced not so much in architecture and fine art as in correspondence and in speech (see below). The real break with ancient oriental tradition, here as elsewhere, was not effectively made, however, until the conquest of Alexander, which inaugurated Hellenism. This is proved by Greek transcriptions on clay tablets (e.g. γισιμαρ δομ δομ = gišimmar dumu = "palm shoot")[1] and a considerable amount of epigraphic material, including the enigmatic Greek inscription in the temple of a god named Gareus, from the Parthian city of Uruk and dated A.D. 110.[2] Babylon had its Greek theatre, excavated in 1904.[3] From the early Seleucid period the figure of a Babylonian priest of Bēl symbolically stands out. It was Berossos, who tried to animate the Greeks with an interest in the ancient history and religion of the land of the two rivers, of which he was still a representative. His work entitled Βαβυλωνιακά or Χαλδαϊκά is preserved only in a few quotations. It was dedicated to Antiochus Soter and was probably a response to a western demand. But in the land of the two rivers there was never any real amalgamation with Greek elements.[4]

Parthian art or, more precisely, Mesopotamian art of the Arsacid period worked with borrowed elements of Greek fashion, but these quickly lost their essential character. The Parthian strata can be detected at many excavation sites, especially at Assur,[5] at Babylon[6] and at Uruk.[7] Like the Seleucids the Arsacids were zealous founders or rebuilders of cities. Thus, near later Kūfa, the map shows us a Vologesia, called after the common Parthian personal name Vologeses.[8]

[1] Bibliography in W. G. Schileiko in *Archiv für Orientforschung* v (Berlin, 1928/29), 11–13; E. Sollberger, "Graeco-Babylonica", *Iraq* xxiv (1962), 63–72.

[2] Heinrich, "Uruk-Warka", pp. 33ff; the inscription itself was published by Christian Meier, "Ein griechisches Ehrendekret vom Gareus-Tempel in Uruk", *Baghdader Mitteilungen* vi (Berlin, 1960), 104–14.

[3] Koldewey, *Babylon*, pp. iv, 293–9; Unger, *Babylon*, p. 41.

[4] Cf. W. Eilers in *OLZ* xxiv (1931), col. 937, and especially P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1923). More recent literature is indicated in *Der kleine Pauly: Lexicon der Antike*, i (Stuttgart, 1964), col. 1548, *s.v.* "Beros(s)os" (W. Spoerri).

[5] Andrae, *Assur*, pp. 171ff ("Die parthische Schicht"); Andrae and Lenzen, "Die Partherstadt Assur".

[6] Koldewey, *Babylon*, *passim*, esp. pp. 210ff.

[7] Jordan, "Uruk-Warka", *passim* and the plan of the city itself; Heinrich, "Uruk-Warka", pp. 30ff, tables 1, 12, 13, 20ff.

[8] Tabula Peutingeriana; Pliny 6. 26. 30; Ptolemy 5. 20. 6; Stephanus Byz. *s.v.* See further in Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, v; later the name in Iranian took the form *Valaxš* > *Valāš* > *Balāš/Gulāš* and can be traced in modern place-names.

As far away as India and Central Asia Greek influence is discernible, especially in pictorial art, and is widely recognizable in the flowing style of clothing. The Berlin Museum possesses two equestrian figures in painted clay, wearing Parthian clothes with their characteristic trousers (pl. 34),[1] such as we still find portrayed in similar equestrian pieces on Sasanian reliefs, and also on silver dishes even in the early Islamic period.

Vessels discovered in Iraq, as well as the sarcophagi, dating from the Parthian period onwards, are characterized by a dark green glaze, shading into blue. Nude female dancers with veils reflect the hedonistic commonplace philosophy of Hellenism, even on the "slipper sarcophagi" (so called by the excavators) of the Parthian period.[2] Special mention is deserved by the stucco decoration of palace walls, with their typical patterns and medallions, yielded up especially from the soil of late Sasanian Ctesiphon (pl. 35(*a*)–(*e*)).[3] This is undoubtedly an imitation of what was originally wood-carving which, in treeless Iraq, had to make do with plaster and clay. Sasanian, too, are the copper pots, with their crooked, projecting beaks, such as are still used in Arab countries today, especially in Iraq.

Now we may consider the relationship of Iran to Babylon in the linguistic and literary sector. To begin with it was the land of the two rivers that took the lead. It is true that at the time when Sumerian script was invented, corresponding attempts were not lacking in the highlands, at Kāshān and Kirmān, in Susa and elsewhere.[4] Even in the period of cuneiform script the Elamite stroke-script was still prominent, but this, too, was soon superseded by the Sumerian–Akkadian syllabary and ideographic system, which took over in the highlands of Iran as everywhere else. Finally, however, Iran evolved its own cuneiform script, the old Persian script of the Achaemenian period, the origins of which are still not certain; but vestiges of ideograms, fragments of old syllabic writing, and a certain absence of system allow us to conjecture that this script, before it fell into the mould of alphabetical characters,

[1] The old Iranian word for trousers was *šara-bāra-*, and now is *šalvār*, which reappears in Aram. T. as *sarbāl*, in Syr. as *šarbālā*, in Arab. as *sirbāl/sirwāl*; see Eilers in *IIJ* v (1961), p. 205; the absence of this word in Armenian borrowings in striking.

[2] According to Koldewey, *Babylon*, pp. 214ff and fig. 133; Andrae, *Assur*, p. 188; Heinrich, "Uruk-Warka", p. 32.

[3] Kühnel, "Der Stuckdekor von Ktesiphon", in *Bericht über die Jahrhundertfeier des Archäologischen Instituts* (Berlin, 1930), pp. 346ff.

[4] Eilers, "Iran zwischen Ost und West", in W. Eilers (ed.), *Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500 Jahrfeier Irans* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 23ff.

had its antecedents – unknown to us – in regions where the Mesopotamian cuneiform script held sway, such as Urarṭu beyond Media, but probably not in Elam.

None the less in those days the cuneiform tradition was already being challenged, and in the end it was overthrown by the acceptance of Aramaic script, first in Iraq and later in Iran. Typical of the Aramaicizing of the land of the two rivers in this time is an Aramaic incantation from the later period of Uruk, written in cuneiform script.[1] The court and the priesthood were still using this ancient, indigenous script for official purposes. In this practice the Assyrian kings were followed by first the Chaldaean and then the Persian emperors.[2] Alongside the official stone inscriptions of the Achaemenians, in the three traditional languages (Babylonian, Elamite, Old Persian), parchment and papyrus records and the use of soot-ink also took their place, for the domestic use of the Achaemenian administration. It was with these materials, and in the Aramaic tongue, that the sovereign corresponded with his satraps, and these, in turn, with other officials. From this "imperial Aramaic", as Markwart has called it, there evolved the Parthian script, which was first used for official documents in Parthian times, and Pahlavī script, the earliest form of which is found in the rock inscriptions of the Sasanian kings.[3] The art of writing and the Aramaic script were transmitted beyond Iran to India (Old Indian *lipi-* "writing" corresponds to Old Persian *dipi-* and Old Indian *pustā-* "book" to New Persian *pūst* "skin"). The Phoenician alphabet must also have passed through Iran to the Indians, who developed their own Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī scripts from it, eventually using these to write down their sacred scriptures. The Avesta, too, was ultimately put into writing; when, where, and how this was done is disputed. The Avesta alphabet, which makes use of vowel letters, undoubtedly on a Greek model, is

[1] *Textes cunéiformes du Louvre*, VI (Paris, 1922), p. 58, first revised by P. Jensen, *Der aramäische Beschwörungstext in spätbabylonischer Keilschrift* (Marburg, 1926); see also P. O. Bostrup, "Aramäische Ritual-texte in Keilschrift", *AO* V (1927), 257–301; C. H. Gordon, "The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform", *Archiv für Orientforschung* XII (Berlin, 1937–9), 105–17. There is also a parallel from Egypt; see R. A. Bowman, "An Aramaic Text in Demotic Script", *JNES* III (1944), 219–31.

[1] The Persian title "great king" (*xšāyaθiya vazraka*, *μέγας βασιλεύς*), like "king of kings" (*xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām*, *βασιλεὺς βασιλέων*, Mid. Pers. *šāhān-šāh* > New Pers. *šāhinšāh*) goes back to the ancient oriental models of Babylonia and Assyria, no matter how foreign the imagery behind the expression is to the Aryan mind. Admittedly the term *mahā rāja* of the Indians is a translation-borrowing from the Persian west.

[3] The three cuneiform versions at the tomb of Darius I in Naqš-i-Rustam (NRb) were accompanied by an Aramaic version, no longer legible; there is a transcription of the few vestiges in E. Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften* (Berlin, 1938), p. 12.

based on the Pahlavī–Aramaic alphabet.[1] The civilizing influence of Babylonia was thus of the greatest importance for the religion of Iran.

In language also the two worlds mutually penetrated one another, and it is especially in language that the Iranian–Semitic cultural encounter – to use an apt phrase of G. Widengren[2] – is most clearly manifest. Sumerian–Akkadian loan-words had, at an early date, reached the highlands from Iraq – words such as the Sumerian *dub* (Akk. *ṭuppum*) "clay tablet" becoming OP *dipi* "(piece of) writing", and Akkadian *maškum* "skin bag" becoming OP *maškā* (fem.). Even in the later Avesta Iraqi–Aramaic loan-words are not unknown; in the *Vendidad*, for example, we find *tanura* (neut.) "oven" (Akk. *tinūrum*, Arabic *tannūr*) and *tūtuk* (fem.) "clay" (Akk. *ṭiṭṭum*/*ṭīṭum*, Arabic *ṭīn*). In the Achaemenian period the reverse process is to be observed. Iranian technical terms – the names for trades and officials, for example – infiltrated the plains[3] – *dātabara* "judge" (NP *dā(d)var*), *ganzabara* "master of the treasury" (NP *ganjūr*), *piδfa-bara* "distributor of rations", *hamāra-kara* "paymaster, finance minister",[4] *xšaθra-pāna* "satrap" (Armenian *šahap*), *apadāna* "palace" (NP *aivān*), *uz-bāra* "(royal) demesne" – and others still unexplained. The plant-name *aspasti* "lucerne" (NP *aspist*) is recorded in cuneiform script in Iraq even before the days of the Achaemenians.[5]

Although it was not until the Arab invasion that the Persian language became saturated with foreign loan-words, in modern Persian there is still a small Semitic stratum that came into the language before the Arab period, e.g.

rīmā "unicorn, wild bull" (Sem. *ri'm-*),
šaidā "mad with love", "demon" (Akk. *šēdum*),
yaldā "mid-winter, nativity (of Christ)" (Sem. *w l d*),
dāhul, *dākhū* "scarecrow" (Aram. *daḥᵃlūlā*),
afyān/*fuyān* "alas!" < *bəgān* (late Babylonian *ba-ga-ni*(-')).[6]

[1] K. Hoffmann, "Zum Zeicheninventar der Avesta-Schrift", in *Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500 Jahrfeier Irans* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 64–73, with table on p. 168.

[2] G. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit.*

[3] Eilers, "Iranische Beamtennamen I", *AKM* xxv. 5 (1940); *idem*, "Die altiranische Vorform des Vāspuhr", in W. B. Henning and E. Yar-Shater (eds.), *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London, 1962), pp. 55–63.

[4] J. C. Greenfield, in M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch (eds.), *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), pp. 180–6.

[5] B. Meissner in *ZA* VI (Leipzig, 1891), 296; H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter* (Leipzig, 1916/17), p. 56.

[6] For bibliography see D. R. Hillers in *BASOR* CCVII (1972), 55.

These are all evidence of the spread of Aramaic education and the use of Aramaic as a *lingua franca* at that time. Such words, not to be confused with the Pahlavi ideograms (the so-called *huzvārish*), had thus found their way into Iranian from Aramaic without any intermediary.

A whole book would be required in order to list from the Arabic dictionaries all those words, the Middle Iranian form of which proves the existence of a post-Achaemenian but pre-Islamic borrowing from Iranian languages; the following Arabic roots are examples.[1]

d b r II "to plan, organize": *dipīr* = "scribe"
d w n II "to list, register": *dīvān* = "collection of writings"
d y n "to profess one's faith": *dēn* = "religion"
δ *b r* "to write, read over": cf. *d b r*
ḍ b r "to document, collect": cf. *d b r*
f t š II "to test, investigate": *pitaxš* "the name of an official"
x z n "to store, preserve": *γazn* "treasure" (Median form)
k n z "to hoard, bury": *ganj* "treasure"
m h r I/II "to seal": *muhr* "seal"
n m q II "to write elegantly, adorn": *nāmak* "letter, book"
r s m I/II "to write down": cf. *r z m*
r z m "to bundle": *razm* "order"
r z q "to nourish, bestow": *rōzīγ* "daily bread"
s r j II "to saddle": *sarγ* "saddle"
z n d q "to practise witchcraft": *zandīγ*
z w q II "to adorn": *zīβāγ* (Median form)
z w r II "to lie, falsify": *zūr* "lie, violence"

Words like *līwān* < *al-īwān* < *aiwān* assumed the Arabic article *al-* > *l-* only later.[2]

Widengren regards the Adiabene, which at first belonged to the Arsacids and then, as part of the Roman province of Assyria, fell under the sway of the west (conquered in A.D. 116 by Trajan), as the bridge in the Parthian era between Semitic Mesopotamia and Iran proper, and here he has chiefly in mind exchanges of literature and "Weltanschauung". The Adiabene is the country between upper and lower Zāb, that is the land of the Kurds; and the Kurdish vocabulary does in fact contain numerous expressions which were borrowed directly from the old Semitic Iraq before the Arab period, and which are foreign to all other Iranian dialects.[3]

[1] Eilers, "Iranisches Lehngut im Arabischen Lexicon", *IIJ* v (1961), 203–32.

[2] E. Herzfeld in *AMI* VI (1934), 88n1; M. N. Bogoljubov in *Palestinskij Sbornik* LXXVIII (Moscow and Leningrad, 1966), 43.

[3] Eilers in *OLZ* LXIV (1969), cols. 485ff.

In literature, too, the land of the two rivers stands in the closest relationship with its neighbours. Ancient material, often as early as Sumerian, found its way westwards (e.g. the story of the Flood in the Old Testament), and also northwards, where it appears among the Hurrians and the Hittites (Gilgamesh). There is an Aramaic version of the Aḥīqar tale, and it turns up again in Egypt, in the Elephantine papyri of the Jewish military colony of the Achaemenian empire. As Ḥaiqar, the wise vizier lives on in Arabian folk-tales (*The Thousand and One Nights*).

The land of the two rivers lay open to all sides, and has always been a melting-pot of races and cultures. Through it eastern writings, too, streamed into the west. The Sasanian empire was the mediator of Indian culture, from which came not only the game of chess (the game of *nard*, backgammon, is considered an Iranian counter-invention), but also the great collection of fables known as the *Panchatantra*, Persian *Kalīla va Dimna*. Other tales existed already in the enriched Iranian form as "The Thousand Tales" (*hazār afsānak*). This was augmented by further material from the Semitic world of Iraq, and in the Islamic Middle Ages grew into the collection known as *The Thousand and One Nights*.[1] The strength of the Iranian–Iraqi element in this is obvious on almost every page, especially in the proper names used; even the name of the heroine, Sheherezade, is Persian: *Chihrāzād*. Sindbād, the sailor, also has a Persian name.

There is yet another subject we must add to those which so often feature in Persian romance and poetry, and in the miniature painting that accompanies them; that is falconry, which was so popular in medieval Europe as well. There is evidence of this sport already in ancient Mesopotamia,[2] whither it may well have come from the eastern mountain civilizations. At all events, among Aramaeans, Arabs and Armenians, the words for falcon and falconer as well as other expressions related to falconry are borrowings from Iran (Aram. *bāzā/ī* and *bāzīqā*; Armen. *bazai/bazē*; Arab. *bāz*).[3]

Religious thought and practice in highlands and plains intermingled from early times. Images on seals portray the same motifs. The Kassites

[1] See A. Christensen, *Märchen aus Iran* (Jena, 1939), Introduction.

[2] B. Meissner, "Falkenjagden bei den Babyloniern und Assyrern", *Beiträge zur Assyriologie* IV (Leipzig, 1902), 418–22.

[3] Eilers, "Iranisches Lehngut", p. 224; U. Schapka, "Persische Vogelnamen" (Würzburger Dissertation, 1972), pp. 13f, no. 49.

brought fresh motifs from the middle Zagros to Babylonia leading to the emergence of the *kudurru* documents. Their gods, like those of the Elamites before them, became identified with the Sumerian–Akkadian pantheon. The tree of life and fecundating genii[1] are characteristic of Assyrian reliefs, as they are of the Lūristān bronzes.[2] In the Achaemenian period there came fresh fusions. That god of enigmatic origin, Tīr (seen in Tiridates, etc.) of the Iranians, corresponds to the old god Nebo (Nabium), the glittering planet Mercury.[3] In the Aramaean syncretism of Hatra, Dura-Europos, and Palmyra the ancient oriental gods seem to be clothed in Iranian ideas and interspersed with like figures from the Greek pantheon; nor is the ancient Arabic element missing.

From a very early date, perhaps even from pre-Achaemenian times, special importance attached to the Jewish–Iranian relationship. A recollection of this relationship is probably preserved in the book of Tobit, who used to travel about between Nineveh and Rhages (Ray). Certainly after the conquest of the northern kingdom of Samaria by Sargon (722 B.C.), many Jews settled in Assyria, as we know from cuneiform legal documents.[4] The connection was even closer in the Achaemenian era;[5] it is possible, indeed, that Jews of the Exile made their contribution to the unarmed invasion of Cyrus (539 B.C.).[6] The Esther story of the Old Testament seems to refer not to Xerxes, but to Artaxerxes I Longimanus (465–25), one of whose wives bore the Babylonian name Kosmartydene (i.e. *ᵈQus-mārta-iddina*). In any event, "Esther" is a form of the Iranian word *stāra* "star" (NP *sitāra*) and in the sense of star-flower (as the Jewish form *Hădassah* instructs us) is the myrtle blossom, still so cherished by Zoroastrians. Through the concept of a "God of heaven", wise Jews like Ezra sought to interest the Mazda-worshipping Iranians in the tribal God of the Jews; and with the collaboration of Nehemiah, cup-bearer to the king of kings,

[1] Cf. B. Hrouda, "Zur Herkunft des assyrischen Lebensbaumes" in *Baghdader Mitteilungen* III (Berlin, 1964), 41ff.

[2] On their chronological setting see P. Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah* (Berlin, 1969).

[3] Cf. W. B. Henning quoted by A. D. H. Bivar, "A rosette *phialē* inscribed in Aramaic", *BSOAS* XXIV (1961), 191; Eilers, *Semiramis* (Vienna, 1971) pp. 43ff.

[4] Sina Schiffer, *Keilinschriftliche Spuren . . . der deportierten Samarier* (Berlin, 1907); *idem*, *Die Aramäer: historisch-geographische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig, 1911).

[5] See, for example, E. Ebeling, "Aus dem Leben der jüdischen Exulanten in Babylonien", *Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Jahresbericht des Humboldt-Gymnasiums Berlin* (Easter 1914).

[6] Eilers, "Der Keilschrifttext des Kyros-Zylinders" in W. Eilers (ed.), *Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500 Jahrfeier Irans* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 156ff.

the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem, destroyed under Nebuchadnezzar, was accomplished.[1] Babylon became the centre of Jewry. It was here that both the Mishna and the Talmud were composed, and the so-called Babylonian vocalization dominated their manuscripts. The vocabulary and proper names in the Talmud unite the Aramaic–Akkadian world with the Persian–Iranian world through hundreds of borrowings.[2]

The liberal-minded ruler Yazdgard I went so far as to marry *Shūshandukht* (Susannah), a daughter of the Jewish exiliarch (*rēš gālūṯā*) in Babylon, who thus became numbered among the dignitaries of the empire.[3] In those days the seat of the exiliarch was at Maḥōzē, that is to say Madā'in–Ctesiphon; but later al-Ḥilla on the Euphrates, six kilometres from the ruins of Babylon, became the central town of the Jews in Iraq.

Like Judaism, the Christian religion was a considerable force in the Sasanian empire, and, once again, its influence was concentrated in Iraq. By the 3rd century this region, with the inclusion of northern Mesopotamia and the region around Susa, had been divided into a series of dioceses, with episcopal sees at Sinjār, Arbela, Kirkūk, Ḥulwān and others, and in Babylonia proper, in Mesene and Khūzistān.[4] Under the Sasanian dynasty the Mazdayasnian faith constituted the state religion, and so conflicts were bound to arise; these reached a climax in the persecution of Christians by Shāpūr II (310–79). When in A.D. 379 Theodosius I became emperor and Christianity became virtually the official religion of the western Roman empire and the emperor the protector of all Christians, the Christians of the Sasanian empire fell under suspicion, not unfounded, of conspiring with enemies of the state in the west. Hence it became the aim of the sovereigns either to convert or reclaim Christians to Mazdaism or, failing this, to separate them from their fellow Christians in the Roman empire. This was achieved, however, only when, in the course of the Christological controversy, the supporters of Nestorius (d. *c.* A.D. 451) separated from the later Jacobites of Edessa and spread their own dogma amongst the Christians of the Persian empire. They carried on a far-flung mission,

[1] H. H. Schaeder, *Esra der Schreiber* (Tübingen, 1930).

[2] S. Telegdi, "Essai sur la phonétique des emprunts iraniens en araméen talmudique", *JA* 1935, pp. 177ff.

[3] Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 38, 110, 272, 388.

[4] See the synoptic table no. 1 in Gernot Wiessner, "Untersuchungen zu einer Gruppe syrischer Märtyrerakten" (Würzburger dissertation, 1962).

based in Iraq; they penetrated Central Asia and reached as far as India and China (there is a Nestorian–Syrian inscription from Singafu dated A.D. 781), and it was the Nestorians who transmitted the heritage of later antiquity to the Muslims. Although strife repeatedly flared up with the zealous clergy of the Sasanian state church, the Christians of Mesopotamia and Armenia enjoyed a respected position. Khusrau II (590–627) even married the Byzantine emperor's daughter Maria; but his other wife, the famed Shīrīn, also a Christian, lives on to this day in the most elevated tradition of poetry and miniature painting as well as in the touching tale of simple people, as the gracious ideal of womanhood.[1]

The drama of the foundation of a new world-religion, which shook both the Christian west and Zoroastrian Iran, was also enacted in Mesopotamia; this religion was Manichaeism. Mānī, a Parthian on his mother's side, was born at Ctesiphon in the last decade of the Arsacid era (A.D. 216). His dualistic doctrine, in some respects a final outcome of Zoroastrianism, quickly spread from Babylonia to the west, to be accepted by the youthful St Augustine, later a Father of the Christian church, and also far into the east, where as late as the 8th century it became accepted as the state religion by the Turkish Uighurs in Chinese Turkestan. In his Iranian homeland, however, Mānī had little success. At first he was regarded with sympathy and interest by Shāpūr I (242–73) to whom he dedicated his book, *Shāpūrakān*, but soon he incurred the hatred of the *mōbad*s, and in A.D. 276 died a martyr under Bahrām I. The place of his death was the prison of Bēlābād (i.e. Bēṯ-Lāpāt), renamed Gundēshāpūr, at Shushtar in the province of Susa.

A genuine product of Iraqi–Iranian syncretism is to be found in the Mandaeans of southern Babylonia, sometimes called Sabians or Nazoraeans, of whom a remnant can be found today, many of them silversmiths, along the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab and around Ḥawīza (Ḥuwaiza) in Khūzistān. These are a gnostic baptist sect having rituals and scriptures of their own. Learned discussion still goes on about their origin and antecedents. Linguistically they continue, in some measure, the now extinct Aramaic of Mesopotamia, with its Sumerian–Akkadian substratum; but their language is also strongly imbued with Iranian elements. The Mandaeans have recently become the object of important research, which is trying to understand the chief elements of their

[1] Eilers, *Semiramis*, pp. 47ff. and elsewhere.

worship and practice, which sooner or later will be threatened with extinction.

Likewise unexplained are the origins of Yazīdīs in Iraqi Kurdistān and the region of Sinjār, north-east and west of Mosul. As their common name "devil-worshippers" indicates, they offer to Satan, as Peacock-angel (Malak Ṭā'ūs), divine worship, in which is possibly to be seen an aspect of the ancient Iranian cult of Ahriman.[1] The sacrifice of white bullocks in honour of the rising and setting sun is reminiscent, too, of the Achaemenian era.[2] Ancient oriental heathen elements seem to have been overlaid with Jewish–Christian–Muslim elements, and even their secret transmission in a Kurdish idiom presents inexplicable contradictions. As Kurds they belong with their Yazīdī dialect to the Iranian nation, but like many other Kurds they are Iraqi citizens. They must have a long history, but their origins remain unknown.[3]

In conclusion, we must not forget that to a large extent the intellectual foundations of the secular world found their ultimate synthesis in the Iraq of the Persian empire. This synthesis enabled them to penetrate the culture of neighbouring countries in all subsequent ages. It was the assimilation of ancient oriental culture into the Achaemenian empire and its Iranian successor states that first gave "Babylonism" the vast world-historical perspective that is still evident on all sides.

There is, for example, the system of measurement and its standardization; the division of the circle into 360 degrees; the division of a day into twelve hours; and astronomy and the calendar in general. It is not for nothing that astrologers were called "Chaldaeans", for their true home was in Aramaean southern Babylon, in Uruk which, especially in the Seleucid–Parthian period, was the centre of ancient astronomy and interpretation of the stars. The latest-dated cuneiform texts include clay tablets from this place containing astronomical observations; these texts come from the 1st century A.D. The Greeks made use of the results and developed the basic principles further. The Persians avidly assimilated these doctrines and incorporated them in their religious system, to be finally recorded in the Pahlavī books known as the *Dēnkart* and the *Bundahishn*.[4] Then the function of the Chaldaeans was taken over by the Magi. By μάγοι/μαγουσαῖοι "Magians" Euro-

[1] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 46. [2] Cf. Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, 8. 7.
[3] Eilers in *RGG* III, cols. 171–3, *s.v.* "Jeziden".
[4] D. N. MacKenzie, "Zoroastrian Astrology in the Bundahišn", *BSOAS* XXVII (1964), 511–29.

peans do not now denote the old priesthood of the Medes,[1] but the wise men and interpreters of stars who came from the east and who figure in the Nativity Gospel.[2] So it is not surprising that the name of the great preacher of salvation to the Iranian nation, Zarathustra, came, in Greek ears, to have the ring of astrology about it, although it had nothing at all to do with stars; the Greek is Ζωροάστρης, which has smuggled in the word ἀστήρ/ἄστρον "a star".

Along with the astronomical cosmology of the land of the two rivers, the Persians took over also the Babylonian calendar, according to which the year began on the first night of spring (20 March). Its most beautiful festival, Naurūz "New Day" or Navasard "New Year", was the old Babylonian new year festival on the first of Nīsān, when the god Marduk decided afresh the fate of mankind. On Iranian soil, the Naurūz festival has continued unbroken to the present day as the great national festival;[3] and even the cheerful observance of Sīzdah-bi-dar, when all the inhabitants take to the open air on the thirteenth of Farvardīn in order to escape bad luck, has an ancient oriental origin. All large cities in Babylon and Assur, as the ritual texts declare, and as archaeological discoveries confirm, owned a special new year festival house (*bīt akīti*) outside the gates, to which, in the reawakening of springtime, everyone went, some by boat along the canals, in solemn procession led by the priests and bearing the statues of their gods.[4]

The music which accompanied this event may well have been related to later music. At all events Islamic musical terminology was based in part upon Sasanian practice, with which the Arabs came into the closest contact in Iraq. The terms for the highest and the lowest note on stringed instruments, *zīr* and *bam*, are Persian, as also are the names of the keys: *ya(k)-kāh*, *dū-kāh*, *sī-kāh*, *jahār-kāh*, and in addition, *Buzurk*, *Kurdān*, *Māhūrān*, *Nawā*, *Rāt*, *Zankūla*, etc. Some musical instruments, too, in the Islamic world, bear Iranian names: *nai* "flute", *zurnā*, *sŭrnā*[5] "oboe", *sitār* "small lute", *kamāna* "violin" and others.

[1] Herodotus I. 101.

[2] G. Messina, *I magi a Betlemme* (Rome, 1933); V. Minorsky, "Two Iranian Legends in Abū Dulaf's Second Risāla" in G. C. Miles (ed.), *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld* (New York, 1952), pp. 172–8.

[3] Cf. Eilers, *Der alte Name des persischen Neujahrfestes*, esp. pp. 54f.

[4] On Uruk see Falkenstein, *Topographie*, pp. 42ff; on Babylon see Unger, *Babylon*, p. 159 and elsewhere; on Assur see Andrae, *Assur*, pp. 5, 151ff. and the upper left corner of the city plan.

[5] In Iraq *ṣerānīč* "flutes" may be the plural of a Mid. Pers. *surnāk* or may represent Gk σύριγγες.

Pictorial art, carving and miniature painting have left us many scenes featuring musicians holding banquets. Even the refined cuisine of the courtly civilization of the Sasanian empire was adopted by the Arabs in Iraq. In the process charming misunderstandings were perpetrated by the simple sons of the desert, and these were recorded, not without malicious undertones, by the Persian chroniclers. Thus the Islamic art of cooking took over along with the dishes and dainties their names as well: names like *pālūdak* in the form *fālūdhaj*, a vermicelli-like strained starch pudding which under the name *pālūda* is still a favourite. Many of the names for fruits and vegetables, too, are Persian: *bēdinjān* "aubergine", *tiqqī* "mulberry" < *tūtkī*, as in Kurdish.

We can add to this several names of kitchen utensils:

Arab. *ṭāwa* "fat bowl" < Pers. *tāva/tāba* "frying pan",
ṣīnī "porcelain",
ibrīq "water-jug",
farfūrī "porcelain";

and in modern Iraq:

čefčīr "big spoon" (NP *kafgīr* "froth-skimmer"),
'krafes "celery" (NP *kalafs*, *karafs*),
māš "vetch",
tun(e)g "small clay water-bottle" (Mod. Pers. *tung*).

Many names of measures found their way into the Aramaic of Achaemenian Iraq, and these are preserved in modern Arabic. There are, for example: Arab. *irdabb/ardabb* "a large measure of capacity" (almost 200 lit.), Aram. *ardəḇā*, Akk. *ardabu*,[1] Old Iran. **ārtā̆-pā̆-* "meal chest" (μέτρον Μηδικὸν σίτου > ἀρτάβη, almost 60 lit.), Arab. *qafīz* "a large measure of capacity", Aram. (Syr.) *qəfīzā* < Old Iran. **kapaʻčiya* from *kap-* "to hold, contain" (Lat. capere)[2] > Mid. Pers. *kapīč*, Mod. Pers. *kavīz* > καπίθη (over 2 lit.), Armen. *kapič*. On the other hand Mod. Pers. *sīr* (now about 75 gm) can be traced back through an Aramaic intermediary form *s(t)tr* (Akkadian *is-ta-tir-ru*) to the Greek στατήρ (variable, about 10 gm, like a shekel).

The fondness of the Persians for the fraction one-sixth may also be Mesopotamian in origin. This designation is based upon the word *dāng* the precise meaning of which is "part" (*dān(a)k*),[3] but by which is meant in fact one-sixth. And so one says, and writes, too, in legal and

[1] See C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1928), and W. von Soden in *OLZ* LXVII (1972), col. 349.
[2] H. W. Bailey in *TPS* 1954, pp. 150ff.
[3] Eilers *Die Welt des Orients* II (Göttingen, 1954–9), pp. 332ff.

commercial documents, *šaš dāng xāna* "6/6 house", i.e. a complete house, and *si dāng zamīn* "3/6 ground" i.e. half of a plot of land. We encounter this reckoning in sixths as early as the cuneiform texts of Mesopotamia, where there are special symbols and words for it: the symbol 𒌋 denotes the word *šuš* i.e. Akkadian *šuššum* < *šudšum* the "sixth"; a third 𒌋𒌋 (i.e. 2/6) is the dual of this (*šuššān*); two-thirds (4/6) is registered by "two parts" (*šini'pu*, *šini'pat*), and five-sixths is called a "large part" (*parab* < *paras rab*). We must note here, that the Sumerian words for 1/6, 2/6 (= 1/3), 4/6 (= 2/3) and 5/6 are borrowed from Akkadian, so that the method of reckoning in sixths may be not Sumerian, but Semitic in origin.

CHAPTER 12

IRAN, ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

POLITICAL CONTACTS

I

The geographical, historical and cultural links between Iran and the Caucasian area extend into remote antiquity. The Caucasus range has been from time immemorial the barrier separating the Eurasian steppe lands from more advanced civilizations centred on Mesopotamia and Anatolia. The Armenian plateau, with its mighty volcanic peaks, later imposed a formidable barrier to the westward drive of the Iranian people, once they were firmly established in their historical habitat. There is little doubt that some of the ancestors of the Iranians, like the Hittites and other Indo-European warrior aristocracies, entered Armenia from the north along the Caspian littoral, which was to be for centuries the classic invasion route for northern nomads attracted by the wealth and economic opportunities of the ancient Near East.

During the Early Bronze Age, extending through the 3rd millennium B.C., north-western Iran formed a single cultural zone with Armenia and southern Georgia,[1] which all entered into the orbit of what is generally known as the Kuro-Araxes culture. This in turn links up with the Khirbet-Kerak pottery culture of Palestine and Syria. The connections between the Armenian and Iranian Middle and Late Bronze Ages are well known,[2] while the Luristān bronzes are sometimes now attributed to Cimmerians who had entered Iran by way of the Caucasus (pl. 36(*a*)).

During recent decades, archaeologists have devoted increasing interest to the civilization of Urartu, the mighty rival of Assyria. The kingdom of Urartu flourished in a vast region centred on Lake Vān in Armenia, and incorporated at one time the advanced culture of the

[1] C. A. Burney, "Excavations at Yanik Tepe, north-west Iran", *Iraq* XXIII (1961), pp. 138–53; XXIV (1962), pp. 138–52; XXVI (1964), pp. 54–61; T. Burton Brown, *Excavations in Azarbaijan, 1948* (London, 1951).

[2] "Anatolia and Armenia was the original centre from which metallurgy spread over the lands of the Ancient East as well as over Europe and eastern Asia." – E. Herzfeld, *Iran and the Ancient East* (Oxford, 1941), p. 160.

Mannians, around Lake Urmīya. The influence of Urartian art and architecture on that of the Medes and Persians has long been suspected. The latest in a series of scholars who have studied this question is David Stronach, who has published a suggestive study linking the lofty Urartian tower temples with Persian Achaemenian structures known from examples at Pasargadae and Naqsh-i Rustam.[1] The Urartians, incidentally, live on in the pages of Greek authors under the name "Alarodians"; both these ethnic terms correspond to the name Ararat, traditionally given to Armenia's highest mountain, which the Armenians themselves know as Masis.

During the heyday of the Achaemenian dynasty, the Armenians and the ancestors of the Georgians came under the aegis of the Great Kings of Iran.[2] Herodotus informs us of the tribute which the various tribes paid to their Persian overlord, while Xenophon's *Anabasis* provides the classic account of the life of the Armenians and south-western Georgian tribes whom he encountered on his toilsome march from Mesopotamia to Trebizond.

The transition from tribal-patriarchal organization to independent monarchies in both Armenia and Georgia is traditionally linked with the campaigns of Alexander the Great, and the eventual replacement of the Achaemenian empire by the much weaker Seleucid state.

In Armenia, the initiative in building up a unified state was taken by the dynasty of the Orontids, who were descended from the satrap Orontes who is mentioned by Xenophon.[3] This Orontes was married about 401 B.C. to the Princess Rhodogune, daughter of the Persian Great King Artaxerxes II. During the fraternal strife between Artaxerxes II and his brother Cyrus the Younger, in which Xenophon and his Ten Thousand played a role, Orontes took the side of his father-in-law Artaxerxes, thus contributing to his victory.

Artaxerxes II turned out to be a feeble ruler, under whom the Persian empire fell into decay. Profiting by this, Orontes set himself up in Armenia as a virtually independent dynast, and became extremely wealthy, having a personal fortune of three thousand talents of silver.

[1] D. Stronach, "Urartian and Achaemenian Tower Temples", *JNES* xxvi (1967), pp. 278–88.

[2] Armenia and the Armenians feature prominently in the Behistun inscriptions of Darius, in which we hear of an Armenian named Dadarshi, sent by the Persians to crush an insurrection in his homeland. See Roland Kent, *Old Persian* (New Haven, Conn., 1950), pp. 117–24, Mention of Armenia also occurs in Persepolis E (Kent, p. 136) and Naqsh-i Rustam (Kent, p. 138); also in the inscription of Xerxes, Persepolis H (Kent, p. 151) and the inscription of Xerxes at Vān itself (Kent, pp. 152–3). See further a Persepolis inscription of Artaxerxes II or III: "This is the Armenian" (Kent, p. 156).

[3] *Anabasis* II. iv. 8, 9, v. 40; III. iv. 13, v. 17; IV. iii. 4.

In later years, Orontes turned against his father-in-law and overlord, Artaxerxes, and led the revolt of the satraps which broke out in 366 B.C. Eventually Orontes submitted and was pardoned; he obtained the satrapy of Mysia and died in 344 B.C.

The name Orontes is itself of Iranian origin, deriving from Avestan *aurand* ("mighty, hero"), and being related closely to Pahlavī *arvand*, with the same meaning. The local, Armenian forms of the name are Erwand, Arawan, and also Hrant. The Orontid dynasty spans the gap between the old Urartian kings (the First Monarchy in Armenia), and the Third Armenian Monarchy of the Artaxiads, in Classical times. Until recently, little was known about the offspring and successors of Orontes I, but their existence as a regular dynasty over three centuries is attested by the inscriptions on the funeral monument of King Antiochus I of Commagene (69–34 B.C.) at Nimrūd Dāgh in eastern Turkey (pls. 37, 38). Antiochus was himself a scion of the Orontid line, and evidently proud of his Armenian royal ancestors, many of whom he enumerates, making it possible to compile a provisional list of this most interesting dynasty:[1]

A. *Satraps of Armenia*

Orontes I, 401–344 B.C.
Orontes II, 344–331 B.C.

B. *Kings of Armenia*

Orontes II (*continued*), 331 B.C.
Mithranes, 331–317 B.C.
(Neoptolemus, satrap, 323–321 B.C.)
Orontes III, 317–260 B.C.
Samus, 260 B.C.
Arsames, 260–228 B.C.
Xerxes, 228–212 B.C.
Abdissares, *c.* 212 B.C.
Orontes IV, 212–200 B.C.

C. *Kings of Sophene*

Zariadris (Zareh), Strategos, 200 B.C.; King, 190 B.C. and after
Mithrobuzanes I, a contemporary of Artaxias I of Greater Armenia, around 170 B.C.
Orontes V, about 95 B.C.; annexation of Sophene by Tigranes II of Greater Armenia

[1] Toumanoff, "The Orontids of Armenia", in *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, pp. 277–354.

Under the last Persian king of the Achaemenian dynasty, Armenia enjoyed peace and prosperity. The rulers of Iran now interfered little in Armenian internal affairs, and trade and agriculture flourished. This state of things was abruptly shattered by the invasion of Alexander the Great of Macedon. The battle of Arbela (Gaugamela) on 1 October 331 resulted in decisive victory for the Macedonians and Greeks over the last of the Achaemenians, Darius III Codomannus. Loyal to the last, the Armenians furnished 40,000 infantry and 7,000 horsemen to the Persian Great King, under the personal command of their own sovereign, King Orontes II. The Armenian cavalry made up the right flank of the Persian line of battle at Arbela.

During this catastrophic defeat, Orontes II apparently lost his life. At any rate, Alexander the Great celebrated his victory by sending Mithranes, a son of Orontes II, to be satrap of Armenia in his father's stead. It is interesting to note that this Mithranes was a former Iranian governor of Sardis in western Asia Minor, who had defected to the side of the Macedonians, and thus found himself ranged at the battle of Arbela on the opposite side to his own father.

Alexander the Great died at the zenith of his power, at the age of thirty-three; but his cultural and imperial heritage lived on (pl. 36(*b*)). Far to the east, in Bactria, Parthia, and at many sites in modern Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, Greek or rather Hellenistic cities grew up almost overnight. Stagnant, sleepy backwaters were revitalized, and decayed trade routes brought swiftly back into operation. Greek taste in building, sculpture and the arts, and knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy spread to out of the way corners of Anatolia and Central Asia. Greek science and technology produced rapid improvements in living standards, hygiene and sanitation, and in domestic amenities, at least for the select few. Greek ingenuity in engineering and construction left its mark over many regions of the old Persian empire.[1]

Armenia, which lay close to Alexander's expansion route towards India, could not escape the impact of the new Greco-Oriental world civilization which he helped to create. At the same time, in this new world of Hellenism, the vestiges of the earlier world of "Iranianism" were not effaced, nor were the elements of local advanced culture inherited from Urartu. Armenia now found herself in close touch with a number of Hellenistic countries, and thus open to new economic and social influences. The exclusively agricultural economy and rural exis-

[1] J. M. Cook, *The Greeks in Ionia and the East* (London, 1962), pp. 154–72.

tence of Achaemenian Armenia, where the use of coined money was scarcely known, were suddenly altered. The important overland route of transit trade, connecting China, India and Central Asia with the Mediterranean world, passed through Armenia, while there was a parallel northern route through Caucasian Albania (Āzarbāījān), Iberia and Colchis debouching on the Black Sea.

Great cities arose along these routes, which became homes of foreign merchants and centres of diffusion for Greek culture. The growth of a money economy and of urban life generally made for the decay of Armenia's traditional tribal-patriarchal society, and for the emergence of new patterns of urban stratification, including the growth of a town bourgeoisie and artisan class, and the commercial exploitation of slaves, though this latter institution never reached the massive proportions which it did in Greece and Rome. From the 3rd century B.C., Armenian royal authority grew more absolute, and the administrative machinery more complex, especially in regard to the royal court and the taxation and fiscal systems. The clan chiefs and rustic headmen began to turn into a more sophisticated courtier and squire class, enjoying greater luxury and ease, and accustomed to a higher standard of living.

To appreciate Armenia's international position within the Hellenistic world, we must take stock briefly of the general situation in the Near East and Asia Minor. After Alexander's sudden death in 323 B.C., his generals quarrelled over the partition of his dominions. Ptolemy created a Greek kingdom in Egypt; Seleucus did the same in Syria and Mesopotamia, with his capital first at Seleucia, replacing ancient Babylon, and then at Antioch on the Orontes. Antipater conserved the old kingdom of Macedon, with its European dependencies as far as the Black Sea and also the Adriatic, with sovereignty over the city states in Greece. The attempts of Lysimachus to create a kingdom of the Bosphorus, with a capital on the Gallipoli peninsula, united his rivals against him, and failed at his death in 281 B.C.

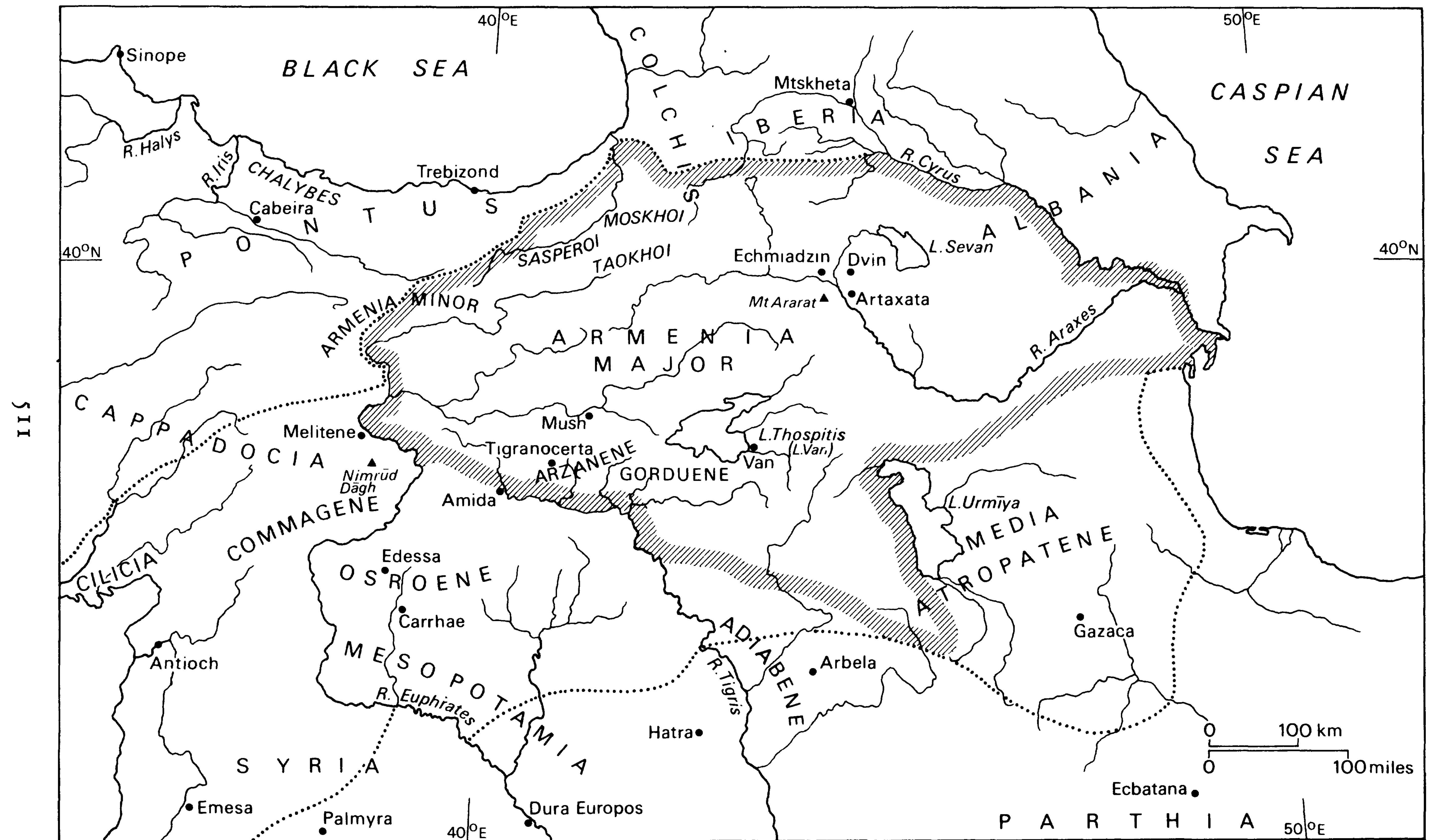
Hardly had Alexander's successors established an uneasy balance of power in the Near East and Aegean region, when new disturbances burst upon the civilized world from outside. Celtic tribes from the middle Danube shattered Macedon, devastated Thrace and Phrygia, and established themselves on the Asia Minor plateau to the west of Armenia, under the name of Galatians. Here they remained until Roman and Christian times, being the recipients of one of St Paul's epistles. Soon afterwards the Iranian-speaking people of Parthia overran the

Persian plateau and deprived the Seleucids of their possessions east of the Euphrates. The Parthians effectively separated the Seleucids of Syria, as well as the Armenians, from those eastern provinces of Alexander's realm which developed into the Greek kingdom of Bactria and also took in large regions of the Indus valley. These eastern losses led the Greco-Syrian kings of the Seleucid dynasty to seek compensation at the expense of Egypt to the south, and of Armenia and other independent states of Asia Minor to the north.

During the Seleucid period, Armenia became divided into several virtually independent kingdoms and principalities. The classification adopted at this epoch persisted, with certain changes, well into the Byzantine era.[1] The most important region, of course, was Greater Armenia, situated east of the upper Euphrates, and including vast areas all round Lake Vān, along the Araxes valley, and northwards to take in Lake Sevan, the Karabagh, and even the southern marches of Georgia. Lesser Armenia, on the other hand, was a smaller and less fertile kingdom, to the west of the upper Euphrates; it included the present-day districts of Sīvās and Erzinjān, and bordered on ancient Cappadocia. To the south-west lay the two little kingdoms of Sophene and Commagene, separated from one another by the middle Euphrates, and having the fertile and desirable Melitene (Malatya) plain running between them. Sophene and Commagene often featured as buffer states between Parthia and Armenia on the one hand, and Syria and Rome on the other. Their royal houses had strong dynastic links with the Armenian Orontid house. Through their proximity to such great cities as Antioch and Palmyra, the kingdoms of Sophene and Commagene early became great centres of Hellenistic and then of Roman art and civilization, which they in turn helped to transmit eastwards into Greater Armenia and Transcaucasia.

The Seleucid kings never succeeded in asserting direct rule over Armenia proper. They collected tribute from local Armenian princes, whom they used to confirm in office by granting them the title of "strategos", corresponding to the old Persian viceregal title of satrap. This situation changed somewhat under the Seleucid King Antiochus III, known as the Great (223–187 B.C.), an ambitious monarch who cherished dreams of restoring the empire of Alexander the Great. The Armenian King Xerxes rashly declined to pay tribute to Antiochus, who besieged him in his capital of Arsamosata and forced him to sub-

[1] The best guide to this classification is given by Adontz, pp. 7–182.



Map 9. Armenia at the time of the Parthian empire.

mit. Xerxes then received the sister of Antiochus in marriage. This lady, Antiochis by name, soon had the unfortunate Xerxes, her spouse, murdered, and united the Armenian kingdom of Sophene to the dominions of Antiochus III, her brother. The ill-fated King Xerxes has left some small coins bearing his portrait. We see on them a dignified, bearded, somewhat donnish-looking figure, wearing a pointed hat or tiara of unusual shape, with a peak in front and a streamer or tassels floating down the back. He has a thoughtful expression on his face, as if wondering how to cope with the political and marital troubles which eventually proved too much for him.

Antiochus III appointed a scion of the Armenian Orontids, Zariadris (Zareh) to be strategos of Sophene in 200 B.C. At this time, in Greater Armenia, the power of the main Orontid dynasty was drawing to a close. The last ruler of this line was Orontes IV (212–200 B.C.). Both he and his brother Mithras, High Priest of the Temple of the Sun and Moon at the city of Armavir, are mentioned in Greek inscriptions discovered there in 1927. One inscription contains an address of High Priest Mithras to his brother King Orontes; another evidently alludes to the king's tragic death.[1] This event was the result of the uprising headed by a local dynast called Artaxias, and evidently instigated from Syria by King Antiochus III. Following this coup, Antiochus appointed Artaxias to be the strategos of Greater Armenia in place of the dead Orontes.

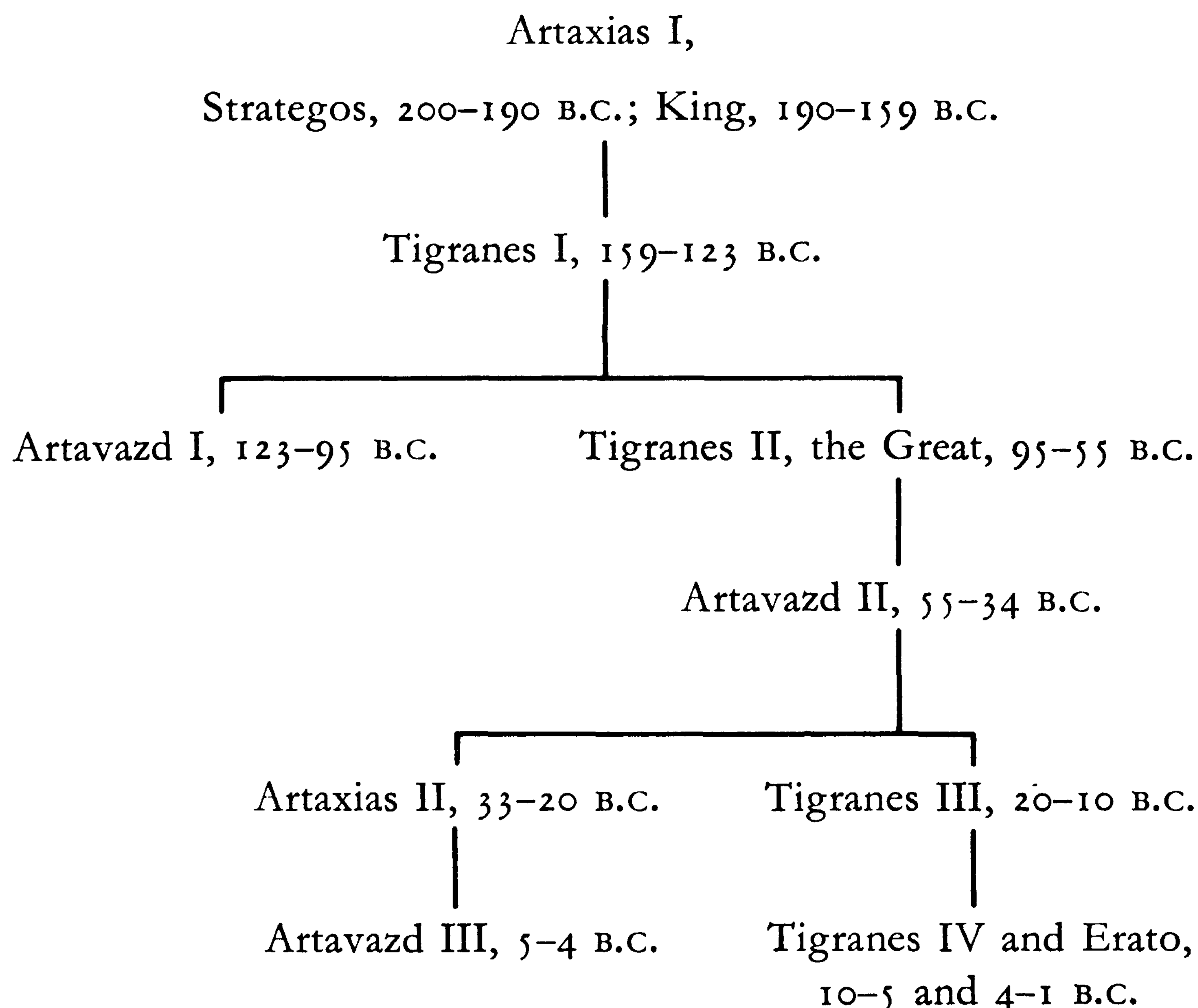
Artaxias was the founder of the Third and greatest Armenian monarchy, counting the Urartian kingdom founded by Aramé as the first, as does Moses of Khorene, and the Orontids as the second. The name Artaxias is the equivalent of the Persian Artaxerxes, and the Armenian Artashes. The table opposite showing the basic sequence of the Artaxiad line is based on the researches of the French numismatist Henri Seyrig.[2]

For a decade after being installed by Antiochus III, from 200 to 190 B.C., Artaxias and his junior partner, Zariadris of Sophene, bided their time. Ultimately, Antiochus overreached himself by challenging the mighty Roman Republic to a trial of strength. No sooner had Antiochus sustained at Magnesia his great defeat at the hands of the Romans (190 B.C.) than Artaxias and Zariadris seceded from the Seleucid state.

[1] These inscriptions, with other essential epigraphic material, are collected and discussed by Trever, *Ocherki po istorii kul'tury drevnei Armenii.*

[2] See particularly H. Seyrig, "Trésor monétaire de Nisibe", *RN* 1955, pp. 85–128; more recently, Bedoukian, "A Classification".

THE ARTAXIAD DYNASTY



In the Peace of Apamea (188 B.C.), which sealed the Roman victory, the Senate in Rome granted them the status of independent rulers. This was Armenia's first juridical contact with the Roman Senate, which was glad to acquire two grateful allies in that strategic part of the world – pending completion of the usual preliminaries to swallow them up and annex their lands to the Roman Republic itself.

Under this new-found Roman patronage, the two Armenian kingdoms of Greater Armenia and Sophene pursued a lively expansionist policy. From the Medes and Persians, Artaxias took Media Atropatena, the modern Āzarbāījān, extending virtually to the banks of the Caspian Sea. From the Georgians he seized a broad slice of territory to the north-west of Lake Sevan. From the Chalybes, Mossynoeci and Taokhoi, the Armenians took much of the upland plateau round Erzerum, and some of the wild mountain country of the Pontic Alps. The province of Taron, round about the town of Mush, was cleared of remaining Seleucid garrisons.

One important result of this territorial growth was the cultural and linguistic consolidation of the Armenian people. Except for the Georgian marches, and for a few remote tribal districts, such as Sassoun, Armenian became the dominant spoken language of the peasant masses, the hunters and tribesmen, and the townspeople, except for those of Jewish and Greek birth. The Greek geographer Strabo (58 B.C.–A.D. 25) lays special stress on this result of the conquests of Artaxias and Zariadris: "Thanks to their work of unification", he says, "all the inhabitants of these various districts to-day speak the same language."[1] It must be remembered, however, that prior to the invention of the Armenian national alphabet after A.D. 400, all works of literature, religious texts, and government decrees, were written down and transmitted in Iranian written in Aramaic characters, or else in Greek. The Armenian royal family and aristocracy were bilingual, speaking Greek or Iranian as well as Armenian – rather like the Russian Court prior to the 1917 Revolution, where English and French were spoken in preference to Russian.

Like the Orontid monarchy in Armenia, the kingdom of Iberia or eastern Georgia has its origins in the era of Alexander the Great. Although Alexander never invaded Georgia or the Caucasus, he is credited throughout the region with all manner of buildings and mighty feats. According to the Georgian Annals *Kartlis tskhovreba* ("The Life of Georgia"), Alexander entrusted the administration of Georgia to a relative of his by the name of Azon (very likely a confusion with the name Jason, of Argonaut fame), who proved such a tyrant as to alienate not only the Georgians, but even the Greeks whom he had brought with him.

The oppressed Georgians then revolted under the lead of Parnavaz, a descendant of Kartlos, eponymous ancestor of the Kartvelian or Georgian nation, after whom Sakartvelo, land of the Georgians, is named. This Parnavaz was a nephew of Samara, patriarch or tribal leader of the Iberians of Mtskheta; with the help of King Kuji of Colchis, Parnavaz drove out Azon and his Greek mercenaries, and was recognized by the Kings of Syria and Armenia as legitimate ruler of Iberia.

Parnavaz reorganized the army of the Kartlosids and appointed seven or eight *eristavi*s or "heads of the people", to one of whom he accorded the Iranian title of *spaspet* or commander-in-chief. These

[1] *Geography* XI. 14. 5.

officers were each assigned one province of Georgia to govern, the spaspet being responsible for the central area of Inner Kartli, around Mtskheta and Uplistsikhe. It seems that this office of spaspet was in fact occupied by the member of the Iberian royal family next in seniority to the king: Strabo states that in the royal hierarchy of Iberia "the second in line administers justice and commands the army".[1] It is also possible to equate these high dignitaries with the viceroys of Iberia, whose hereditary necropolis was uncovered in Mtskheta-Armazi, together with engraved gems bearing portraits of two of them, Zevakh and Asparukh.[2] The difficulty is that these viceroys of Mtskheta bore the Iranian title of *pitiakhsh* or *vitaxa*, roughly approximating to that of satrap, and suggesting that they were officials appointed by the Persians to supervise the Iberian kings.[3] No doubt the Persian Great Kings appointed such officials whenever they were strong enough to impose their will on the Georgians, but at other times, we must conclude that the vitaxae were in fact deputy monarchs, with the duties of a High Constable. This latter interpretation is supported by the bilingual epitaph of a Georgian princess named Serapita, inscribed in Greek and an unusual form of Aramaic which has been called the Armazi script. Deciphered and published by Professor Giorgi Tsereteli, the epitaph runs:

I am Serapita, daughter of Zevakh the younger, pitiakhsh of Farsman the king, and wife of Iodmangan the victorious, winner of many conquests, master of the court of Ksefarnug, the great king of the Iberians, and son of Agrippa, master of the court of King Farsman. Woe, woe, for the sake of her who was not of full age, whose years were not completed, and so good and beautiful that no one was like her in excellence; and she died at the age of twenty-one.[4]

This inscription makes it abundantly clear that, during the 2nd century A.D. at least, the vitaxa of Iberia was no foreign official, but a high dignitary of the royal court, allied by marriage with the highest aristocrats in the Georgian land.

The political history of Iran during the Parthian and Sasanian periods is scarcely intelligible without reference to Armenia and Georgia. The last great opponent of Rome in the Black Sea region, King Mithradates

[1] *Geography* XI. 3. 6. [2] Lang, *The Georgians*, pp. 84–5, fig. 18, plate 26.

[3] See the discussion in Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 156–64.

[4] G. V. Tsereteli, "Armazskaya bilingva" (The bilingual inscription from Armazi), *Izvestiya Instituta Yazyka i Material'noi Kul'tury* (Bulletin of the Institute of Language and Material Culture) XIII (Tbilisi, 1942).

Eupator of Pontus (113–63 B.C.), was to a great extent a Caucasian dynast, being ruler of Colchis or Western Georgia, and the land of the Laz, around Trebizond. His son-in-law, King Tigranes the Great of Armenia (95–55 B.C.) spent some years as a hostage at the court of King Mithradates II of Parthia. When at the summit of his power, Tigranes had four vassal kings, including the ruler of Atropatene (Āzarbāījān) attending him like slaves wherever he went.[1]

At one time, the domains of Tigranes the Great stretched from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean, from Mesopotamia up to the Pontic Alps. The vast empire, formed of a varied mixture of diverse tribes, with their own dialects and cultures, could hardly be turned overnight into a cohesive and durable political structure. Inner disunity aided the designs of the Romans, who launched a series of onslaughts on the Armenian dynast, beginning with the invasion by Lucullus in 69–68 B.C., and culminating in the campaigns of Pompey in Armenia, Iberia and Colchis in 66–65 B.C. The downfall of Tigranes the Great was precipitated by the flight of his son, Tigranes the Younger, to the court of the Parthian king Phraates III, who supplied him with an army with which to invade Armenia, and join forces with the victorious Romans.

This débâcle was typical of the situation of Armenia, and to a lesser extent, Georgia, in the succeeding centuries, when Transcaucasia was a bone of contention between the two warring empires of Rome and Iran. Rome's interests were best served when Armenia was courted and reinforced as a buffer state. Spasmodic Roman attempts to annex and assimilate Armenia and Georgia led in the long run to disastrous confrontations with the mobile and warlike Parthians and Sasanians, whom the Romans were seldom able to beat in open combat.

There is no space here to chronicle the vicissitudes of the wars between Rome and Parthia, and later between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran, over Armenia's largely defenceless territory. Lucullus and Pompey, Crassus and Mark Anthony, Corbulo and Trajan, are but a few of the Roman leaders who campaigned in this region with varying degrees of success or disastrous failure. One unforgettable moment in these bloodthirsty, and in the long run, fruitless wars occurred after the battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C., in which Crassus and his legions were completely wiped out. The Armenian king Artavazd had urged Crassus to attack Parthia by way of the Armenian highlands, but Crassus had ignored his advice. Artavazd, thus rebuffed, allied himself with the Parthian king

[1] Plutarch, *Lives*, "Lucullus", xxi. 5.

Orodes II, and was entertaining him at the Armenian capital, Artaxata, when a messenger arrived carrying the head of the unhappy Roman general. Artavazd, though in close personal and political touch with the Parthians, was so well versed in Greek literature that he composed plays in Greek, which were acted at the Armenian court. When the head of Crassus was brought in, a performance of the *Bacchae* by Euripides was taking place, in honour of the king of Parthia. The head of Crassus was thrown down into the midst of the assembled company, and the leading actor picked it up and danced round in a bacchanalian frenzy, crying:

"We've hunted down a mighty chase today,
And from the mountain bring the noble prey!"[1]

Such were the hybrid manners and culture of an Armenia divided between the sophisticated Western influences of Greek and Rome, and the virile eastern world of Parthia.

A new chapter opened in Armenian history when the Parthian Arsacid prince Tiridates was crowned king of Armenia by the Emperor Nero in A.D. 66. From then on, the destinies of Armenia were closely linked with those of the Parthian royal house of the Arsacids. Indeed, during the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., the Armenian throne was regularly reserved for the Parthian Great King's nearest kin, who was known as "Great King of Armenia" – rather as the heir apparent to the British throne is called the Prince of Wales. This custom, political conditions allowing, continued into early Sasanian times: thus prior to 293, the future Great King Narseh was viceroy of Armenia with the title of *Vazurg Armenān Shāh* ("Great King of Armenia").[2]

The following are the principal rulers of the Arsacid line, to whom Armenia owed the preservation of so much of her ancient glory: dates are approximate only.

Armenian Arsacids

Tiridates I (53–75). Officially crowned by Nero, A.D. 66
Sanatruk (75–110)
Axidares (110–13)
Parthamasiris (113–14). Deposed and murdered by the Emperor Trajan
Parthamaspates (116–17)

[1] Plutarch, *Lives*, "Crassus", xxxiii.

[2] Not "King of Great Armenia", as proposed by Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan", p. 517. See on this point Honigmann and Maricq, *Recherches*, p. 172, n. 1.

Valarsh I (117–40). Founder of the city of Vagharshapat
Aurelius Pacorus (161–3)
Valarsh II (180–91)
Khusrau I (191–217)
Tiridates II (217–52)
Tiridates III (298–330). First Christian king of Armenia
Khusrau II, called Kotak (330–8). Founder of the city of Dvin
Tigranes V or Tiran (338–51)
Arshak (Arsaces) II (351–67)
Pap (369–74)
Varazdat (374–80)
Arshak III (380–9). Died as the last king of Roman Armenia
Originally co-king with:
Valarshak (380–6). King of Persarmenia
Khusrau III (386–92)
Vramshapuh (392–414). Encouraged invention of the Armenian alphabet
Artaxias IV (423–8)

When the Parthians were overthrown by the Sasanians in A.D. 226, the old Armenian royal house became redoubtable foes of the new Great Kings of Iran. The Armenian Arsacids remained, as they claimed, the champions of Iranian legitimacy. This helps to explain the singular bitterness of the relations between Arsacid Armenia and Sasanian Iran, extending right up to and even after the abolition of the Armenian Arsacid dynasty in 428. We are further confronted with the singular spectacle of a Parthian king, Tiridates III, whose forbear, Tiridates I, was a Magian who was forbidden to defile the sea by sailing to Rome in a boat, being the first ruler of a substantial kingdom to embrace Christianity as the state religion (traditionally, in A.D. 301). We even have a dynasty of Patriarchs of the Armenian Church, descending from the Parthian nobleman who became St Gregory the Illuminator, being proudly remembered by the Armenian Church to this day by the surname Partev, the Parthian.[1]

To be fair to the Sasanians, it must be borne in mind that weakness of Iranian control over Armenia directly contributed to the ignominious defeats which the declining Parthian realm had suffered at the hands of Rome at the end of the 2nd century. The Romans had exploited their dominance in Syria and Armenia to stage a series of aggressive raids against the nerve centres of Parthian royal power. To seal off this

[1] Ormanian, pp. 8, 196.

Roman military corridor was one of the prime and fully justified aims of Great King Ardashīr Pāpakān, who spent the year 230 in a whole series of campaigns against Roman Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Media and Armenia. The Armenians, however, put up a spirited resistance, and succeeded in beating off the Persian offensive.

The resurgence of Iranian power gathered momentum under Ardashir's son Shāpūr I (241–72). In 244, the Roman army of Emperor Gordian III was decisively beaten at Meshik, near Ctesiphon, where Gordian lost his life. The new emperor, Philip the Arab, was forced to cede suzerain rights over Armenia to the Persian Great King. Eight years later, in 252, Shāpūr invaded Armenia, forcing King Tiridates II of the Arsacid line to flee to the Roman Empire, while his sons went over to the Persians.[1] Shāpūr's culminating triumph, in the defeat and capture of the Emperor Valerian in 260, was full of import for the future destinies of Armenia and also of the Georgian lands.

Many controversial points remain to be cleared up in the political history of Armenia during the 3rd and early 4th centuries. For this important period, the Armenian national sources are inextricably mingled with semi-legendary elements, while Roman authors tend to be extremely laconic in regard to Armenian affairs. All the more interest attaches to the well-known inscriptions of Shāpūr I and his high priest, the Magus Kartir, on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam. From Kartir's inscription, we learn of the efforts of the Zoroastrian hierarchy to stamp out idolatry and other heresies throughout the Persian empire, and to impose orthodox beliefs and the pure Avestan ritual.[2] With its sophisticated syncretistic religious traditions, Armenia must have been a prime target for the zeal of Kartir and his acolytes. This religious offensive was itself made possible by the military successes of Shāpūr, commemorated in his own inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, where he asserts his suzerainty over Armenia. The inscription of Kartir alludes to an Iranian invasion of Caucasian Iberia and Albania some time after 260. The inscription of Shāpūr numbers Iberia and Albania among his vassal states, and reveals the existence of a puppet ruler, Hamazasp, installed by him in Iberia.[3]

Likewise of prime importance for the history of Armenia is the inscription of Paikuli. Published by Herzfeld in 1924, this document has

[1] Toumanoff, "The Third-Century Armenian Arsacids", p. 253.

[2] Chaumont, *Recherches*, pp. 74–6.

[3] For the text of the inscriptions, see M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran* (Chicago, 1953); a commentary is provided by Toumanoff, "The Third-Century Armenian Arsacids", pp. 252–6. For developments in Caucasian Albania, see Movses Daskhurantsi, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*.

been all too seldom utilized in Armenian historical scholarship.[1] The value of the Paikuli inscription for Armenian history lies in the reliable chronological framework which it affords for events leading up to the accession of Narses as Great King of Iran (293), as also in its mention of a certain "Tīrdāt the King" among the monarchs who offered Narses, the former Viceroy of Armenia, their congratulations on his triumph.[2] Whether this Tīrdāt is to be identified with the first Christian king of Armenia, or whether he is an earlier king with the same name, remains a moot point.[3]

II

The situation in Georgia at this period was somewhat different from that prevailing in Armenia. The Romans, and later, the Byzantines, exploited their naval supremacy in the Black Sea to maintain garrisons and trading points at strategic localities in Abkhazia, Colchis and Lazistan. The local western Georgian population was ruled by petty princes and clan leaders, until the emergence of a strong dynasty in Lazica in the 6th century. In eastern Georgia (Iberia), our knowledge of the dynastic history of the powerful kings of Mtskheta-Armazi is incomplete, in spite of the noteworthy researches of Professor Cyril Toumanoff.[4] It seems that at some time in the eighties of the 2nd century A.D., the last Iberian king of the Third Parnabazid dynasty, Amazaspes or Hamazasp II, was replaced by his sister's son, Rev, son of the king of Armenia. There then existed for over a century an Arsacid or Parthian dynasty in eastern Georgia, allied by blood to the Armenian Arsacids. These Iberian Arsacids became extinct in the 4th century, when the Iberian throne passed to King Mirian III, subsequently St Mirian, the first Christian king of Iberia. The dynasty which he founded is called that of the Chosroids: they were a branch of the Iranian Mihranids, one of the Seven Great Houses of the Sasanian Empire.

The adoption of Christianity by the Armenians and Georgians was to some extent a political move, designed to place the country within the orbit of Greco-Syrian civilization, and to resist cultural and religious assimilation by the Persians. For three centuries, up to the destruction of Sasanian Iran by the forces of Islam, the history of Armenia and Georgia

[1] There is, for instance, no reference to the Paikuli inscription in Grousset's *Histoire de l'Arménie* (Paris, 1947).

[2] E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli: Monument and inscription of the early History of the Sasanian Empire* I (Berlin, 1924), p. 119.

[3] Toumanoff, "The Third Century Armenian Arsacids", pp. 261–75, makes a good case for regarding the two Tīrdāts as separate and distinct historical figures.

[4] *Studies*, pp. 81–4.

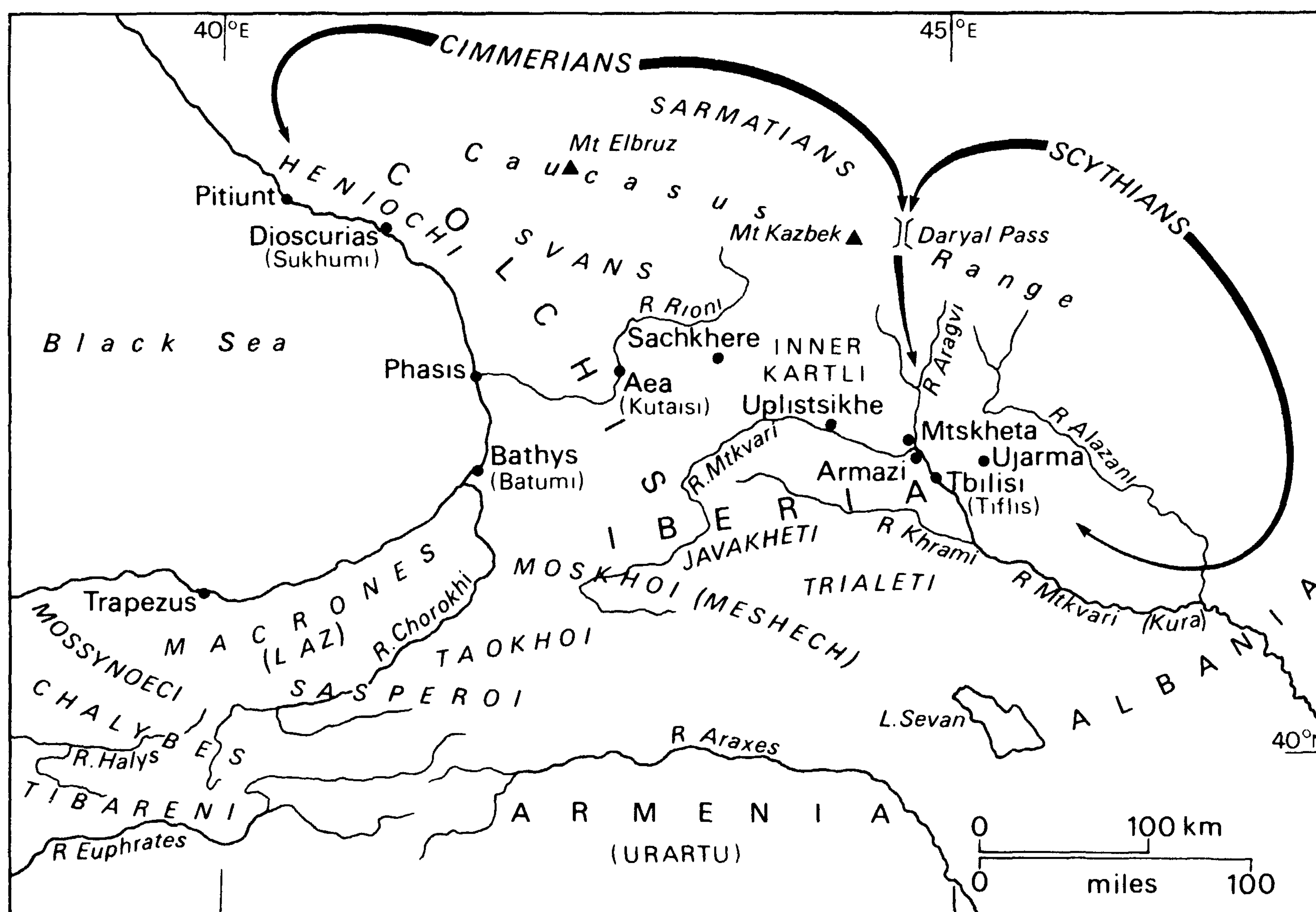
is a sad chronicle of deportations, forced conversions and cruel martyrdoms. In 365 Shāpūr II systematically sacked and destroyed every major town in Armenia, deporting the inhabitants, who included a large number of Jews. By his edict of 449, Yazdgard II sought to impose Zoroastrianism upon Armenia and Georgia. This provoked vigorous resistance. At the battle of Avarair on 2 June 451, sixty-six thousand Armenians under the national hero, Prince Vardan Mamikonian, encountered an army of two hundred and twenty thousand Persians. Vardan and many thousands of his followers perished on the battlefield, and the death of these martyrs is commemorated to this day in the Armenian calendar on Shrove Thursday.[1] Resistance to the Persians continued in Georgia under the semi-legendary King Vakhtang Gorgaslan (*c*. 446–510), whose name means "the wolf-lion". After Vakhtang Gorgaslan's death, Georgia too was reduced to becoming a province of the Persian state.

The extinction of royal power in Iberia left a vacuum in the local power structure of the Georgian lands. This gap was filled now by a resurgent monarchy in western Georgia, where royal power had been in abeyance since the days of Mithradates Eupator of Pontus, the foe of Pompey and the Romans. The new kingdom included that of ancient Colchis, land of the Golden Fleece, and much of Pontus itself; it was called Lazica, being under the leadership of the Laz tribes of the Black Sea coast. In 523 King Tsate of Lazica was baptized and installed a Byzantine garrison in the mighty fortress of Petra (Tsikhis-dziri) overlooking the Black Sea north of Batumi; the site has been excavated by the Batumi Research Institute, under its director, Aslan Inaishvili.

Throughout the reign of Justinian (527–65) and that of his adversary, Khusrau I Anūshirvān (531–79), the Persians and the Byzantines fought for control of Lazica, as well as of upland Svaneti. The Lazic kings did their best to play off the Persians and Byzantines against one another. They had little reason to prefer the Christian Greeks to the Persians, since agents of Justinian even assassinated the Lazic king Gubaz II in 553. These wars are chronicled in detail by Procopius and his continuator Agathias of Myrina, who provide valuable data on Persian operations in the Caucasus, as well as almost verbatim reports of speeches and dialogues, which bring the period vividly to life.[2]

[1] On the ideological front, the struggle was carried on by the remarkable 5th-century Armenian polemist Eznik of Kolb, with his eloquent *Refutation of the Sects* (Russian trans. by V. K. Chaloyan, Erevan, 1959; French version by L. Mariès and Ch. Mercier, in *Patrologia Orientalis* XXVIII. 4 (1959), pp. 549–776.

[2] For Agathias see bibliography.



Map 10. Colchis and Iberia (Georgia).

Byzantine expansion was resumed by the Emperor Maurice (582–602). Maurice is supposed to have been a simple Armenian peasant, who made his way to Constantinople on foot, and there worked his way up to the supreme dignity. A stone obelisk marking his home is shown to visitors in the Armenian village of Oshakan, close to the memorial chapel of St Mesrop Mashtotz, who invented the Armenian alphabet. However, the treatment meted out by Maurice to the Armenians generally was not very liberal. In 591, he signed a peace treaty with Persia, which advanced the Byzantine frontier roughly to the line between lakes Vān and Sevan, with Dvin (pl. 41(*b*)) in the reduced Iranian part.[1] Finding the Armenians troublesome in their homeland, Maurice conceived a plan to co-operate with the Great King of Iran in removing all the main Armenian nobles and their followers from their homes.

According to the Armenian chronicler Sebēos, Maurice wrote to the Persian Great King.

The Armenians are a knavish and indocile nation. They are situated between us and are a source of trouble. I am going to gather mine and send them to

[1] See A. A. Kalantarian, *Material culture of Dvin, 4th–8th centuries* (Armenian, Russian and English texts) (Erevan, 1970).

Thrace; you send yours to the East. If they die there, it will be so many enemies that will die. If, on the contrary, they kill, it will be so many enemies that they will kill. As for us, we shall live in peace. But if they remain in their country, there will never be any quiet for us.[1]

The two rulers apparently agreed to carry out this plan, but the Persians failed to collaborate fully. When the Byzantines began to carry out the deportation order, many Armenians fled to Persia, which they now found less tyrannical than Christian Byzantium.

The successes of the Emperor Maurice emboldened the Georgians to reassert their independence under Byzantine protection. The Iberian princes Guaram and Stephen I and II took the unusual step of issuing coins modelled on the silver drachms of Hormizd IV of Iran (579–90), but embodying various independent elements in the design, beginning with the addition of the initials of the respective Georgian princes, and culminating in the substitution of the Christian Cross for the sacred flame normally portrayed on the Zoroastrian fire-altar on the coin's reverse.[2] This was, of course, a political act of the first magnitude, and points to the efforts of Duke Stephen I of Iberia between 590 and 607 to re-establish the political autonomy of eastern Georgia, and strengthen the Christian faith. This Duke Stephen I, who received the Byzantine title of Patrikios (Patrician) is portrayed on one of the sculptures on the eastern facade of the church of Jvari ("the Cross") on a high hill overlooking the Kura valley near Mtskheta (pl. 40). It was in Duke Stephen's time also that the Georgian Church finally broke with the Gregorian Church of Armenia, and was reunited with that of orthodox Byzantium.

The reign of Khusrau II Parvēz (590–628) was marked by violent fluctuations in the balance of power in the Near East. The assassination of Emperor Maurice in 602 enabled the Persians to ravage Syria, capture Antioch and Damascus, and in 614, to raid Jerusalem and carry off the relic of the Holy Cross. The Emperor Heraclius (610–41) staged a counter-attack and invaded Armenia, Georgia and Āzarbāījān. With the aid of a Khazar khan named Jibghu, Heraclius captured Tiflis. A contingent of Armenian troops led by Mjej Gnuni was also largely instrumental in the success of these campaigns, which culminated in 628 in the overthrow and murder of Khusrau himself.

The triumph of Heraclius and his Armenian and Khazar auxiliaries proved irrelevant to the long-term evolution of Christian Caucasia. Under the Prophet Muḥammad, the Arabs were already on the move to

[1] P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, (Lisbon, 1963), pp. 14–15.

[2] D. M. Lang, "Notes on Caucasian Numismatics", *NC* XVII (1957), pp. 139–40, pl. XVII.

world dominance. Weakened by two centuries of religious schism, Byzantium was in no state to resist their advance, while the Sasanian empire was also in a decayed and precarious state. The caliphate of 'Umar (634–44) saw Islam's transformation from a religious sect to an imperial power, and the subjugation of both Iran and Armenia to the heirs of Muḥammad. At the decisive battle on the River Yarmuk, a tributary of the Jordan, in August 636, the Byzantine commander-in-chief was an Armenian named Vahan or Baanes. Shortly before the battle, Vahan was actually proclaimed emperor by his troops. The catastrophic defeat of his forces put an end to Vahan's imperial dreams, and he later retired to Sinai and became a monk.

Within a decade, the Arabs had overthrown the Sasanians and subjugated Armenia and Georgia also. Arab amīrs sat in Dvin and Tiflis, and a new era had opened for the Caucasian peoples.

SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTACTS

So far, we have concentrated on providing a concise, perhaps over-simplified historical outline, without which it would be difficult to grasp the pattern of political and dynastic cross-currents between Iran and the Armenian and Georgian peoples. However, this is only part of the story. Even more interesting, and certainly more durable, were the social, cultural and religious influences which connected the Iranian nation with its smaller north-western neighbours during the millennium under review. Indeed, there is good reason to assert that the Armenians, equally with the Parsees, rank as the true spiritual heirs of Parthian and Sasanian civilization. But for the records of the Armenian chroniclers of the 6th and subsequent centuries, such as Faustus of Buzanda and Sebēos, we should be hard put to it to reconstruct the chronological outline of events in Iran and neighbouring lands of the Near East.[1]

There are many references among the writers of antiquity to similarities of dress and manners between the Armenians and the Medes, Persians and Parthians. That excellent authority Strabo, while adhering to his unlikely story that the ancestor of the Armenians was a certain Thessalian called Armenus, who accompanied Jason and the Argonauts to Colchis, also lays stress on the points of outward resemblance

[1] Similarly, it would be hard to overestimate the value of the Paikuli inscription of Great King Narses for the chronology of late 3rd-century Armenia. In addition to Herzfeld's original publication, see Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan", pp. 517–22, and Toumanoff, "The Third-Century Armenian Arsacids", pp. 261–75.

between the Armenians and the Medes. Speaking of the Medes, Strabo remarks:

As for customs, most of theirs and of those of the Armenians are the same, because their countries are similar. The Medes, however, are said to have been the originators of customs for the Armenians, and also, still earlier, for the Persians, who were their masters and their successors in the supreme authority over Asia. For example, their "Persian" *stola* (robe), as it is now called, and their zeal for archery and horsemanship, and the court they pay to their kings, and their ornaments, and the divine reverence paid by subjects to kings, came to the Persians from the Medes. And that this is true is particularly clear from their dress; for tiara, *citaris* (head-dress), *pilus* (skull-cap), tunics with sleeves reaching to the hands, and trousers, are indeed suitable things to wear in cold and northerly regions, such as the Medes wear, but by no means in southerly regions.[1]

The similarity of costume remarked on by Strabo is confirmed by evidence of ancient Armenian and Parthian sculpture, and especially by coins, showing Armenian rulers wearing the famous Armenian pointed tiara, which is also paralleled in Median models (cf. pls. 37(*a*), 39(*b*)). Reference to the divine reverence paid to kings is interesting, since both Tigranes the Great of Armenia and his son Artavazd laid claim to the title "theos", which is occasionally inscribed on their silver coinage.

Strabo also remarks on parallels between the way of life of the Armenians and Medes, and that of the Iberians of the less mountainous regions of Eastern Georgia:

Now the plain of the Iberians is inhabited by people who are rather inclined to farming and to peace, and they dress after both the Armenian and the Median fashion; but the major, or warlike, portion occupy the mountainous territory, living like the Scythians and Sarmatians, of whom they are both neighbours and kinsmen; however, they engage also in farming.[2]

Nowhere is this Iranian influence seen more clearly than in the many linguistic borrowings from Median, Old Persian and Parthian, which exist in the Armenian language, and to a much less extent, in Georgian, even today. Many numerals and names of basic necessities of life in Armenian are Middle Iranian, showing conclusively that the linguistic influences were not confined to a narrow aristocratic section of society.[3]

[1] *Geography* XI. 13. 9. [2] *Geography* XI. 3. 3.

[3] A. Meillet, "De l'influence parthe dans la langue arménienne", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, I (Paris, 1920), p. 9. Other sources cited by Grousset, *Histoire*, pp. 116–17. See further R. N. Frye, "Continuing Iranian influences on Armenian", in *Yād-Nāme-ye Irāni-ye Minorsky*, ed., Minovi and Afshar, Publications of Tehran University, No. 1241, 1969, pp. 80–9.

Armenian personal names are very largely Iranian in origin, and predominantly Parthian. This will have become clear from the many names of kings and prominent personages cited earlier in this chapter. Frequently the names are compounds of names of Iranian gods – the most common being of course Mithradates and Tiridates. (Tir was the Armenian counterpart of Mercury and Hermes.) The Armenian mother goddess, Anahit, also revered in Parthia, lives on today in the popular Armenian Christian name Anahit. Common Armenian names of Parthian origin include Tigran, Vahram, Suren, Babken, Khoren and Arshak. The Supreme Catholicos of All the Armenians since 1955, Vazken I, bears a name which goes back to Parthian times. It is also interesting to note that in 8th- and 9th-century Constantinople, when groups of ambitious Armenians were in the habit of seizing the throne for shorter or longer periods, they nearly always bore ancient Armenian names of the Parthian era: a Bardanes or Vardan was actually Emperor from 711 to 713, while other leading Byzantine generals and politicians included a Tiridates, several more Vardans, three individuals named Artavasdos, and even one Ardashīr.[1]

With regard to proper names, the situation in Georgia is more complicated, partly as a result of the Greek and Roman settlements around the Black Sea coastline. As a result, Georgian personal names both in ancient and in modern times are a fascinating amalgam of local, indigenous ones, mingled with Classical, Biblical, Byzantine, Persian, and more recently, Russian, French and even English ones. During the period under review, a number of Parthian and Sasanian names feature in the annals of Georgia, such as Varaz-Bakur, Parnavaz, Mihran and Farsman (Farasmanes), also Mihrandukht and Bakurdukht. Alongside these we encounter other Iranian names like Artag, Ksefarnug and Asparukh, which have more in common with the Iranian steppe world of the Scythians and Alans, which extended down into North Caucasia. Asparukh was one of the prominent viceroys (pitiakhsh) of Iberia about A.D. 200: it is interesting to find this name cropping up later as that of a famous Sublime Khan of the Bulgars, who migrated from the North Caucasus in the 7th century and invaded the Balkans in the reign of the Emperor Constantine IV (A.D. 680–81).[2]

Unlike the Armenians, the Georgians later became very fond of Iranian romance and epic literature; translations of Firdausī's *Shāh-*

[1] Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 22; *Cambridge Medieval History* IV, pt. 1, pp. 21, 62, 73.
[2] *Cambridge Medieval History* IV, pt. 1, p. 484.



Fig. 1. Intaglio sardonyx ring bezel of the pitakhsh (governor) Asparukh of Iberia, *c.* 200 A.D., 2 × 2 × 1·8 cm. From Armazi.

nāma and of Gurgānī's *Vīs and Rāmīn* make their appearance in later medieval times, while the Georgians were close neighbours of Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1140–1209). As a result, another wave of linguistic borrowings, including proper names, occurs during the Georgian Golden Age associated with the reign of Queen Tamar (1184–1213). The glories of the Sasanian era, and of Persian romantic literature, are conjured up in such popular Georgian names as Rostom, Kaikhosro and Vakhtang, also Leila and Nestan-Darejan.

The political systems of Armenia and Georgia had much in common with the great monarchies of Iran. Considering that the Arsacids of

Armenia were Parthian princes, and the Mihranids, Chosroids and Guaramids of Iberia all closely connected with one or other of the Seven Great Houses of Iran, this was only to be expected. The connection with Parthia does much to explain the early transition in Armenia from a partly tribal and patriarchal, partly slave-owning social and economic system, to one of full-fledged feudal relations. If the system of Tigranes the Great was one of Oriental despotism on the Seleucid model, the Arsacids are already recognizable as forerunners of feudal monarchs of medieval times. The same can be said of the Mihranid (Chosroid) kings of Iberia, about whose political and social arrangements, a number of early hagiographical works give useful data.[1]

Virtually all the attributes of medieval European feudalism can be found in Parthia, Armenia and Iberia. Allodium and fiefs, investiture and homage, immunity and vassalage, all these familiar concepts have their Parthian and Caucasian counterparts. Feudalism in its most flourishing age was, of course, anything but systematic, and it is an institution very difficult to define. However, certain fundamental principles have been distinguished by medieval historians, and these apply quite well to both Parthia and to Armenia and Georgia. These include: the relation of vassal and lord; the principle that every holder of land is a tenant and not an owner, until the highest rank is reached – sometimes the concept even rules in that rank also; that the tenure by which a thing or estate of value is held is one of honourable service, not primarily economic, but moral and political in character; the principle of mutual obligations of loyalty, protection and service binding together all the ranks of this society from the highest to the lowest; and the principle of contract between lord and tenant, as determining all rights, controlling their modification, and forming the foundation of law.

Naturally, there are other, conflicting trends at work even in the most typical feudal societies. The king would tend to group around himself a personal corps of retainers, bodyguards and officials, with the aid of whom he would try to control, and even remove, unsatisfactory vassals. Then again, holders of great feudal estates and offices invariably aimed to hand down their possessions and dignities to their offspring, so that a network of dynastic aristocracy would grow up. In Armenia and Iran, great noble houses would tend to monopolize offices of state, so that the Bagratids, for instance, were the hereditary coronants of the Arsacid kings.

[1] Lang, *Lives and Legends*, pp. 55–6, 58–60.

Feudalism would often come to an end, permanently or temporarily, when kings such as Henry VII, Louis XI, or Ivan the Terrible, built up a burgher and bureaucratic class, and a royal standing army, and were in a position to impose their dictates on a cowed aristocracy. A comparable situation seems to have existed in Iran at some phases of the Sasanian monarchy, whenever the Great Kings felt strong enough to override the local princes and vassal tribal leaders. In Armenia and Georgia, the opposite trend predominated. First in Armenia, in A.D. 428, and later in Iberia, around A.D. 530, the feudal princes took the initiative in petitioning the Great King of Iran to abolish the monarchy, in the mistaken hope that this would leave the local aristocracy free to manage their own affairs undisturbed. In effect, as we know, the abolition of these monarchies simply led to the appointment of Iranian *marzpāns* or governors-general, so that the latter state was worse than the first.

We owe to Professor Cyril Toumanoff a singularly full description of the various grades of Armenian and Georgian feudal aristocracy – princes, dukes, margraves, knights, gentry, and so forth – also of the high offices of state which were usually assigned exclusively to members of the great houses.[1] Soviet historians, notably Professor S. T. Eremian, have been active in analysing the social status and economic condition of the Armenian peasantry (*shinakank*), and of the trading, artisan and working class generally (*ramikk*). For what it is worth, Moses of Khorene gives a sketch of the Armenian state, as organized on Parthian lines by the first Arsacid ruler Tiridates I, shortly after A.D. 60. Posts about the royal person, and the important positions of master of the royal hunts, chamberlain, head of sacrifices, grand falconer, guardian of the summer residences, and so forth, were distributed among the members of the great families. Fiefs were granted to Tiridates' vassals, and four territorial Wardens of the Marches were appointed, one to the region at each cardinal point of the compass. (These Wardens bore the title of *bdeashkh*, and are no doubt successors of the four client kings who attended on Tigranes the Great.) The army was divided into the standing frontier garrisons, and the feudal levies summoned only in time of war. Local justices were appointed for town and country, and times for royal audiences, and also public entertainments, were fixed.[2]

The Sasanians destroyed most of the official records of the Parthians; the Arabs destroyed most of the archives of the Sasanian kings. In view of the close connection between Armenia and Iran, and the

[1] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 33–144.

[2] Colledge, p. 64.

early date – 5th century A.D. onwards – of the beginnings of Armenian historiography, the accounts of the classical Armenian historians of political events and social relations in Iran generally, and in Armenia specifically, acquire enhanced value and interest. In his monograph on Iranian feudalism, Professor Widengren had the happy idea of grouping together a selection of extracts from the classical Armenian historians bearing on feudal relationships, alongside passages from Iranian sources such as the *Kārnāmak ī Artakhshēr ī Pāpakān.*[1] Without going into technicalities, it may be worth citing verbatim a few key passages from the early Armenian historians relating to feudal relations in Armenia, which also have bearing on political and social relationships in contemporary Iran. Widengren also makes the interesting point that the Iranian word *pasānīk*, which stems from Sasanian times, and signifies an armed guard or retainer, also occurs in Georgian, in the form *pasaniki*, or more commonly, *pasenaki.*[2]

Among the many texts illustrating feudal relations and institutions in ancient Armenia and Parthia, the following present special interest:

1. King Pap (369–74) suspects the *sparapet* or generalissimo Mushegh Mamikonian of disloyalty: "Then placing his hand in that of King Pap, Mushegh swore fealty to him, saying: 'I shall live and die for you, as my ancestors have done for your ancestors, as my father has done for your father King Arshak, thus will I do for you also, only do not lend ear to my slanderers.'"[3]

2. King Tiridates orders Mamgon, ancestor of the Mamikonian Princes, to exterminate the rebellious family of Selkuni: "Mamgon hastened to inform the king of the success of his mission. Tiridates, filled with joy, immediately wrote for him a royal charter [*hrovartak*, from Parthian *fravartak*], granting him suzerainty over all the lands which he had promised him; and the king appointed him prince [*nakharar*] in place of the rebel, calling the fief after his name: Mamgonian."[4]

3. King Arshak II (351–67) tries to weaken the feudal nobility: "And he slew many *nakharars*. From several he removed their hereditary fiefs, and he confiscated several princely domains for the crown. But the

[1] G. Widengren, "Recherches sur le féodalisme iranien" in *Orientalia Suecana* v (Uppsala, 1956), pp. 79–182.

[2] Widengren, *op. cit.*, p. 89; D. Chubinov, *Gruzino-Russky slovar'* (Georgian–Russian dictionary) (St. Petersburg, 1887), col. 1006.

[3] Faustus of Buzanda, *History of Armenia* v. 4 (Venice, 1933), p. 199.

[4] Moses of Khorene, *History of Armenia* ii. 84 (Tbilisi, 1913), p. 229.

Kamsarakan family, who were the lords of Shirak and Arsharunik, were utterly destroyed, and their districts annexed to the crown lands [*ostan*]."[1]

4. While the Armenian kings could sometimes confiscate the domains and fiefs of the leading princes, they were often powerless to deprive them of hereditary feudal offices. The following incident relates to the reign of King Varazdat (374–80) when Manuel Mamikonian comes back from long captivity in Iran: "But when Manuel had returned to the glory of his princely estate, without any prior authorization from King Varazdat, he took over the position of sparapet or generalissimo, because this was something which had come down to him from his ancestors in direct succession. However, King Varazdat had granted the title to his own foster-father Bat as a mark of favour."[2]

As we have seen, the history of Armenia and ancient Georgia is one of ceaseless tensions between the monarchy and the feudal nobility, though the sentiment of aristocratic pride was often combined with one of touching loyalty to the king. The prowess of the princes and of the nobles was inherent in a knightly society, spending much of its time heavily armoured upon horseback, in warfare or in hunting. The Iberian crown of Eastern Georgia appears to have been stronger than the Armenian in relation to the dynastic aristocracy. In Georgia, the feudal office of duke (*eristavi*, or "head of the people") was not extended to all of the princes, only a few more powerful ones becoming dukes of the provinces of Iberia. However, neither the Iberian nor the Armenian monarchy could survive the dual strain of feudal disobedience, and Sasanian imperial centralism, so that monarchy was eventually abolished in both countries, for a period of close on four centuries.[3]

Finally, it is necessary to stress the many close links between Iran, Armenia and Georgia in religion, architecture and the arts, which continued even after the two latter countries had officially adopted Christianity. These links were closest under the Parthians, when Armenia was ruled by the Parthian Arsacids, the first monarch of this line being himself a Magian. However, community of cult and religious beliefs between Iran and Armenia were in evidence as long ago as Urartian times, then during the Achaemenian monarchy, and again much later

[1] Faustus of Buzanda, *History of Armenia* IV. 19, p. 137.

[2] Faustus of Buzanda, *History of Armenia* V. 37, p. 243.

[3] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 140–2. See Widengren, "Recherches", p. 178, for a list of 39 Armenian terms relating to feudal institutions and economic conditions, together with their parallels in Middle Iranian.

under the Sasanians, though here this community was more the result of alien imposition from outside than of spontaneous sharing of common traditions and experience.

In Georgia, however, contacts were particularly strong during the Sasanian period. Beautiful silver dishes and other splendid examples of Sasanian metal ware, with cult representations and Pahlavī inscriptions, have been recovered from ducal and viceregal burials and other excavation sites in a number of places in Georgia. Both in Armenia and in Georgia, Sasanian influence is evident in many details of church and secular architecture (pls 40(*a*), 41(*a*)). In fact, there have even been quite convincing attempts to link the design of the characteristic Armenian and Georgian cruciform domed church with the Zoroastrian fire temple. Besides the cruciform pattern, circular domed churches are also found. Certainly the lion and wild beast motifs so common in friezes and capital decorations of early Georgian and Armenian churches and palaces owe much to Sasanian models.[1]

Georgia and Armenia by their geographical situation were particularly well suited to be a bridge between the religious world of the Gathas and the Avesta, and that of the Greek and Asianic pantheons. In Iran generally, the arrival of Hellenism in the wake of Alexander the Great sparked off an immense new religious movement – the syncretism of Greek and Oriental deities. Henceforth, Semitic (including Babylonian), Iranian and Greek deities began to be considered interchangeable. Thus Ahuramazda became the Iranian equivalent of Bel, Mithra of Shamash, and Anahita of Ishtar or Nanai. Apollo in the Susan hymn is addressed as Mara, a Syrian title denoting "Lord". Heracles was usually the Hellenic aspect of the Semitic Nergal or the Iranian Verethraghna, and Athena of the Arab goddess Allat.[2]

This eclectic, syncretizing tendency is very apparent when we come to study the religious cults of ancient Iberia and Colchis.[3] As direct descendants of ancient peoples of Anatolia, some of the tribes who helped to form the nucleus of the Iberian nation inherited cults and

[1] Apart from the interesting pioneer work of J. Strzygowski (e.g. *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 2 vols., Vienna, 1918), we refer to Sh. Amiranashvili, *Istoriya gruzinskogo iskusstva*, (Moscow, 1963), pp. 74–81 and 92–6, Plates 18–21, 24–7; also S. Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar, Church of the Holy Cross* (Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 25–6.

[2] Colledge, pp. 107–8.

[3] Charachidzé, *Le Système religieux de la Géorgie païenne*; M. G. Tseretheli, "The Asianic elements in national Georgian paganism", *Georgica* I (London, 1935), pp. 28–66; O. G. von Wesendonk, "Über georgisches Heidentum", *Caucasica* I (1924), pp. 1–102; "Nachträge zum georgischen Heidentum", *Caucasica* II (1925), pp. 121–30.

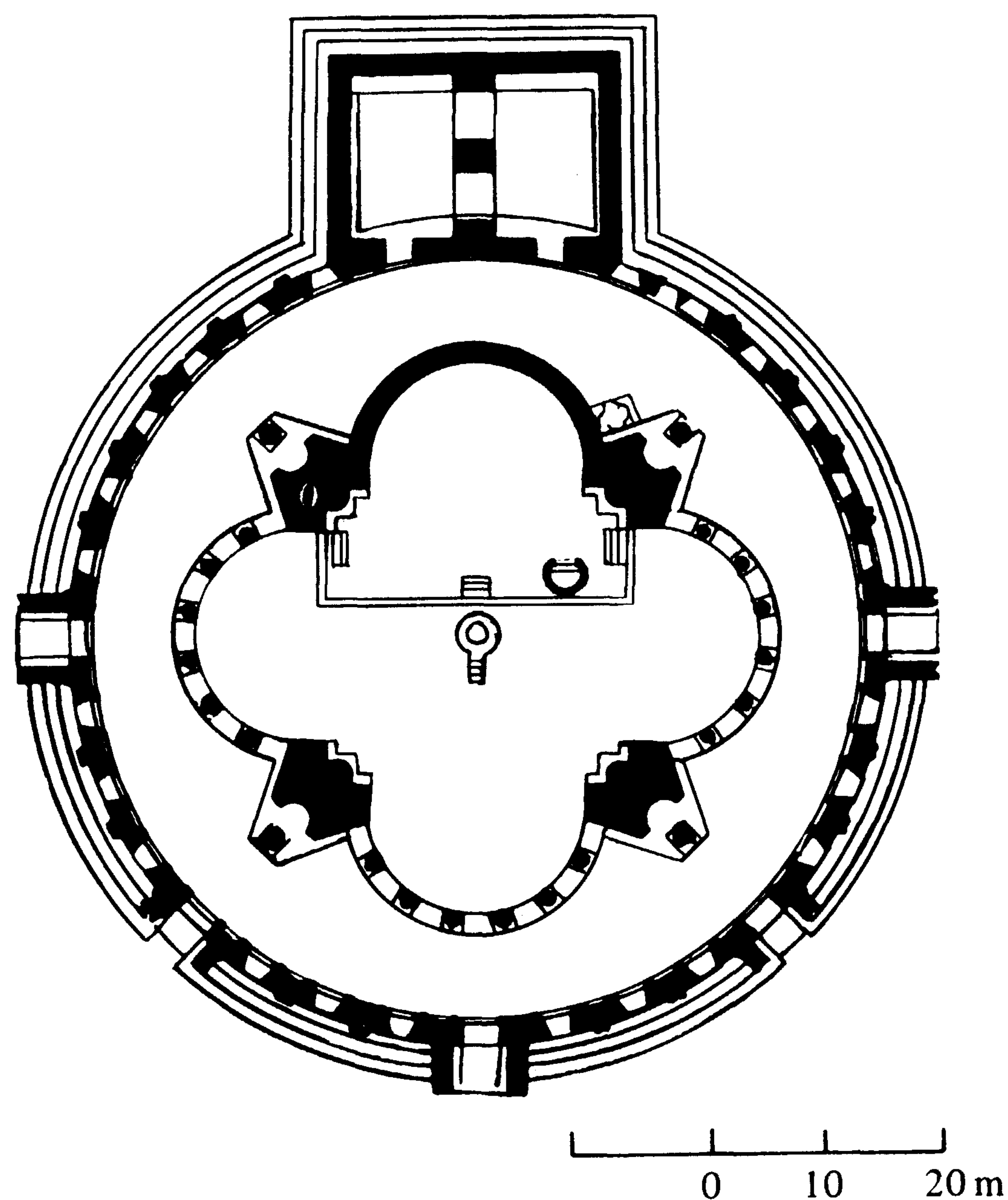


Fig. 2. Ground plan of Zvarnotz Cathedral, Armenia, the circular form recalling the outline of a Zoroastrian fire temple.

beliefs closely akin to those of the Hittites, Phrygians, perhaps even the Sumerians, Assyrians and Babylonians. Testifying to this is the Trialeti goblet (dating from about 1500 B.C.), with its scenes from a fertility rite connected with the Tree of Life and the potion of immortality. The colonization of the Black Sea coast by Milesian settlers from the 7th century B.C. onwards led to the spread of Hellenistic cults which were to become popular in Parthia at a later period. A temple of Apollo existed at Phasis (Poti) at the mouth of the Rioni as early as the 5th century B.C., as witness the discovery in north Caucasia in 1901 of a silver drinking bowl of that period with the inscription: "I belong to Apollo the Supreme of Phasis". Later a huge statue of the goddess Rhea also stood in a conspicuous site on the Phasis estuary. Strabo speaks of a temple of the sun-goddess Leucothea and an oracle of Phrixus in the land of the Moskhoi – the Georgian province of Samtskhe; this temple was formerly rich but was later desecrated and robbed of its treasures.[1] Tree worship is attested in Georgia through the cult of the wood goddess Dali, corresponding to Artemis; a moon

[1] *Geography* XI. 2. 17.

cult lives on in Georgia to this day, having become merged with that of Saint George, also known as *Tetri Giorgi*, or "White George".[1]

The prevalence of Mazdaism in Georgia is confirmed by the archaeological evidence, which includes bowls showing the sacrificial figure of a horse standing before the ritual fire-altar. According to the "Life of Saint Nino", who converted eastern Georgia about A.D. 330, the Georgian national gods were named Armazi (to be identified with Ahuramazda of the Zoroastrian pantheon), Zaden, Gatsi and Gaim. When Saint Nino offered up prayers to God, the Almighty sent down hail "in lumps as big as two fists" on to the abode of the heathen idols and smashed them into little pieces. Simple folk whom Saint Nino encountered at the town of Urbnisi worshipped the sacred fire of the Zoroastrians, and also images of stone and wood.[2]

The pantheon of ancient Armenia was likewise an international, syncretic one. The complex edifice of Armenian paganism began to take shape during the ascendancy of the Orontids and the early Artaxiads. In addition to the famous temple of the Sun and Moon at Armavir, the Armenians maintained a whole group of sanctuaries in the holy forest at Ashtishat (Acesilene), in the province of Taron, not far from Mush. Here stood a mighty golden statue of Anahita, patron and protectress of Armenia, and famed all over the Iranian world as goddess of waters and fertility. A bronze head of Aphrodite/Anahit from Satala is in the British Museum (pl. 39(*a*)). Anahit's father was Aramazd, the mighty Ahuramazda of the Iranians, the Olympian Zeus of the Greek pantheon. Mithra, god of covenants and of light, was also widely popular; a high priest of that name officiated at the temple of Armavir around 200 B.C. In the form "Meherr", Mithra features later in the Armenian national epic "David of Sassoun" as the Great Meherr, Lion of Sassoun, who planted a splendid garden in Dzovasar and filled it with every kind of animal and fowl which God had created.[3]

The popular goddess Astghik, whose statue was often found alongside that of Anahit, corresponded on the one hand to the Assyrian Ishtar, on the other to the Roman goddess Venus. Astghik's lover was the Iranian deity Verethragna, god of war and victory, known in Armenian as Vahagn. Venerated in the guise of Heracles the dragon slayer, Vahagn was the son of Aramazd (Ahuramazda), as well as being identified with Ares, the Greek god of battle.

[1] Lang, *Georgians*, pp. 88–90. [2] Lang, *Lives and Legends*, pp. 23–5.

[3] Surmelian, p. 93; S. K. Chatterji, "Armenian hero-legends, and the Epic of David of Sasun", *JASB*, 4th ser. 1 (1959), pp. 199–220.

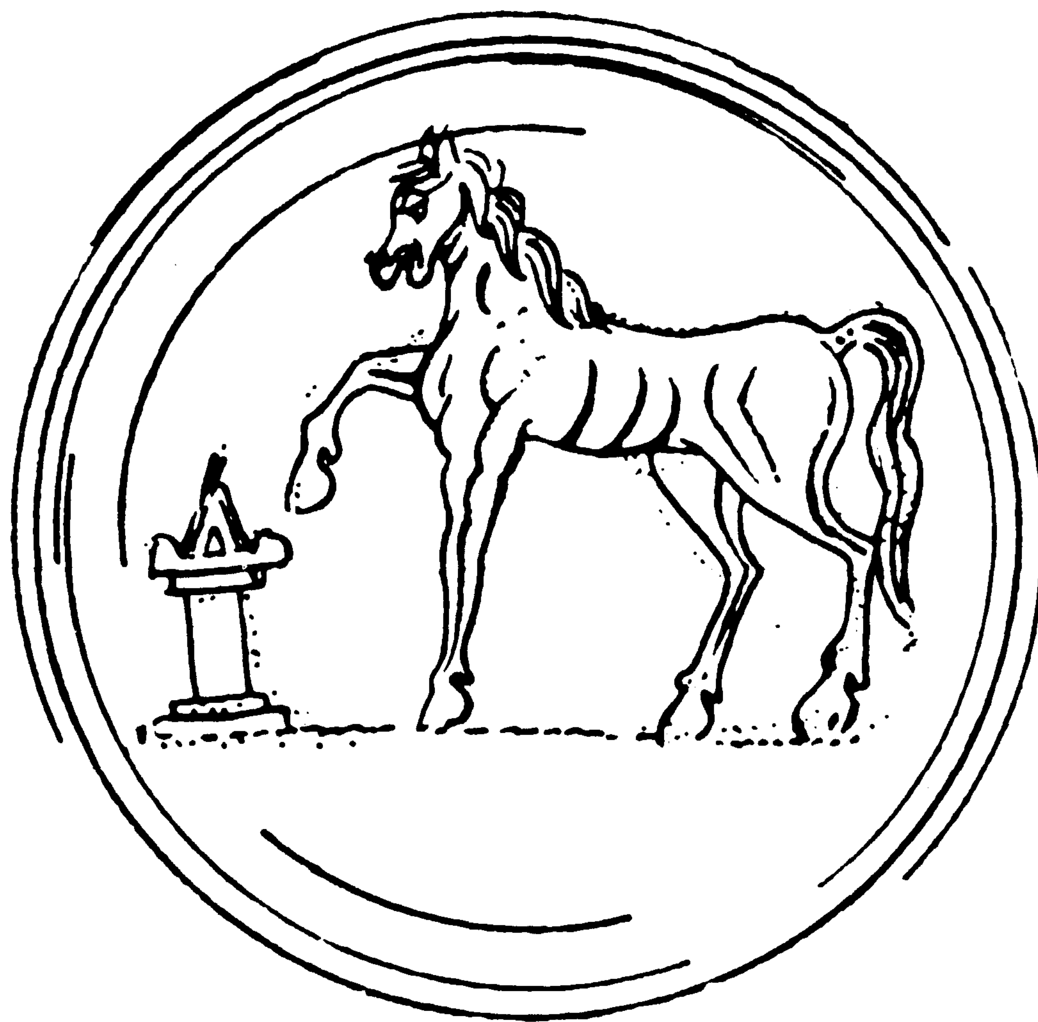


Fig. 3. Horse standing before Mithraic fire altar, engraved on the inside of a silver bowl from Armazi, 2nd century A.D.

The most striking example of the syncretism of gods in ancient Parthia actually occurs in a former Armenian satellite kingdom, namely Commagene, the modern Malatya district. Here a scion of the Armenian Orontid house, King Antiochus I (69–34 B.C.) built himself a funeral hill at Nimrūd Dāgh (pls 37, 38). The sanctuary is grandiose, being surrounded on three sides by terraces and dominated by an artificial mound nearly five hundred feet high. On the east and west terraces stood a row of five colossal seated figures, many times life-size, which represented four deities and King Antiochus himself. The chief statue represents the compound deity Zeus–Oromasdes, or Ahuramazda. A second depicts Apollo–Mithra–Helios–Hermes. And a third presents to us Verethragna–Heracles–Ares. Into the terrace walls were sunk some ninety stone reliefs, depicting in most cases a pair of figures, one of whom is usually Antiochus. We see the king's paternal ancestors, traced back to the Achaemenian monarch Darius, son of Hystaspes, while Greek inscriptions record the dead ruler's connections with the Armenian dynasty of the Orontids.

Armenian and Georgian demonology has many Iranian counterparts. Thus, the *daeva* or demon spirit of the Avesta was feared in Armenia as in Georgia. The Armenian word is *dev*, Georgian *devi*. These devs preferred stony places and ruins; they appeared as serpents and other

monstrous forms, some physical and others incorporeal. The *druzhes*, like their Avestan counterpart, were lying, perjuring, harmful spirits, believed to be of female sex. The *yatus* or sorcerers of the Avesta also have their Armenian equivalents, who were even able to slay men. There existed destructive female demons called *parik*, whose husbands were known as *kaj*. The *kajis* also feature prominently in medieval Georgian demonology.[1]

Manichaeism, one of the most original of Iranian religious movements, had many adepts in Armenia and Georgia. Armenia was the stronghold of the Paulicians, a later sect of Manichees, who then gave rise to the insurgent sect of the Thondrakites.[2] One of the vehicles for Manichaean teachings in Georgia and Armenia was the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, which began as an edifying Buddhist tract, but acquired many Manichaean features. As Professor Henning discovered, a metrical version of the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat was contained in the oldest poetic manuscript written in Classical Persian so far known to us.[3]

In other cultural spheres also, there was much mutual enrichment arising from contacts between Iran and the Caucasian nations during the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian eras. One has only to think of the perpetuation of the ancient Iranian *gōsān* or minstrel in the Armenian *gusans* (Georgian, *mgosani*), who have continued to delight popular audiences right up to modern times, composing both music and poetic text as they went along. As early as the 5th century, the Armenian Catholicos St John (Hovhannes) Mandakuni composed a treatise, "On the Theatre and the Gusans", a copy of which may be seen in the Matenadaran or National Manuscript Library in Erevan. Political relations between Iran and her Caucasian neighbours may not always have been cordial, but there is no doubt of the depth and extent of reciprocal influences in many spheres of art, literature and religion, as well as in social and political organization.

[1] M. H. Ananikian, *Armenian Mythology* (Boston, 1925); Shota Rustaveli, *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, tr. Marjory S. Wardrop (London, 1912).

[2] Professor Nina Garsoïan, in *The Paulician Heresy* (The Hague, 1967), ably defends the view that the Paulicians were not Manichaeans, but Adoptionists; however this opinion has not yet been accepted as definitive by all scholars in this field.

[3] W. B. Henning "Persian poetical manuscripts from the time of Rūdakī", in W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater (eds), *A Locust's Leg: Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London, 1962), pp. 89–104; Lang, *The Balavariani*.

CHAPTER 13

IRAN AND CHINA

I

In Chinese myth the Tibetan massif and particularly the Kunlun range is taken to be the western limit of the world. The pre-Han lore of the far west is embodied in the story of the miraculous journey of King Mu, of the 10th century B.C., during which he glimpses vast mountains and mysterious kingdoms. Later the Taoists entertained the idea of a western paradise of the immortals, presided over by Hsi-wang-mu, the Queen Mother of the West, and this superstition paved the way for the success of the doctrine of Amitabha Buddha and *his* western paradise after Buddhism had been implanted in China.[1]

The Chinese had no sure knowledge of what lay beyond the western mountains before Chang Ch'ien's exploration in the 2nd century B.C., but archaeological evidence points to material contacts with western Asia at a much earlier time. For example, from their close similarity a common origin seems probable for the pottery kiln of the Yang-shao neolithic culture of central China and the kiln used at Tepe Sialk in central Iran during the later 4th millennium B.C. The Yang-shao painted pottery itself constitutes the easternmost region reached by a tradition of ceramic ornament which spread from the Iranian plateau. In the case of China this diffusion was not accompanied by the transfer of any cultural system. A comparable slender affinity is seen in the three-lobed and tripod pottery vessels which occur in northern Iran and along the middle course of the Yellow river, the *li* and *ting* of the Chinese. In the bronze age one notes an initial divergence of east and west, followed by a peculiar combination of western and eastern traits of material culture. In the earlier part of this period, that of the Shang dynasty in China, the coincidence of a socketed axe and a design of spearhead in China, Siberia and the Ural region, shows that an

[1] The Emperor Mu reigned at the beginning of the 10th century B.C., and the legend of his journey is thought to have been fully formed at latest by the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. See Cheng Tê-k'un, "Travels of the Emperor Mu", *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* LXIV (1933), 124; E. J. Eitel, "Travels of the Emperor Mu", *China Revue* XVII (1888), 233; L. de Saussure, "Le voyage de Mou Wang et l'hypothèse d'Ed. Chavannes", *T'oung Pao* XX (1921), pp. 19–31.

established channel of east–west communications through Asia led far to the north before it turned westwards. The difference in methods and forms which appear between the Shang culture and the Türkmen culture sited along the northern slopes of the Kopet Dāgh, underline this divorce between bronze-using cultures in China and in western Asia.[1]

From the 9th or 8th century B.C., however, a cultural link leads more directly towards the Iranian world; it is indicated by ornament cast on daggers and harness-mounts in north China under the early Chou kings (notably birds' heads and the motif of the animal-in-a-ring). One sees beginning the tenuous but effective cultural continuum through Central Asia between Iran and China which largely determined the character of the east–west exchanges thereafter. From about 600 B.C. the pooling of ideas derived from civilization in east and west culminated in the creation of regional cultures marked by the so-called Scythic traits. These are a sword (the *akinakes*), arrowheads, knives, and a common repertoire of animal motifs in art, of which the deer emblem is the most prominent. Such items demonstrate the far travel and extraordinary uniformity of some basic elements of material and immaterial culture. Through the Scythic zone ideas could evidently move independently of tribal migration. On the whole the archaeological records tell against attempts to identify groups of artefacts strictly with ethnic groups, and one must conclude that ideas could move through the Scythic zone independently of large-scale tribal migration.[2]

Nomadism based on heavy cattle and the concomitant horse-breeding became the rule of life in the steppes. Cultural uniformity followed upon economic uniformity. By the middle of the first millennium B.C. the combination of nomadic pastoralism and Scythic culture reigned from south Russia and the north-eastern provinces of Iranian settlement to northern China. Its eastern boundary was abrupt, running north of the Yellow river on the line of contact with the settled Chinese population, and along the north–south ranges of the T'ai-hang and Hsing-an mountains, beyond which steppe conditions cease. The causes of wide-ranging nomadism in Central Asia have long been debated, and are certainly complex. A deterioration of climate must have contributed to it, at a time difficult to determine. Soviet scholars however favour

[1] S. Masuda, "Umam material and the *li*-tripod", *SPA*, pp. 3213ff; Watson, *Cultural Frontiers*, pp. 67ff.

[2] Watson, chap. 4; on the effect of climatic change, pp. 42ff, citing M. F. Kosarev, "Bronzovoi vek lesnogo Ob'-Irtysh'ya", *Sovetskaya Arkheologia* 1964.3, 37–44; V. I. Matyushchenko, "K voprosu o bronzovom veke v nizovykh reki Tom", *Sovetskaya Arkheologia* 1959.4, pp. 154–65.

cultural advance as a decisive factor, arguing that the explosive growth of herds was not stimulated solely by change in the environment. This theory finds support in archaeological evidence; including that instanced above.[1]

Although it was open to cultural penetration from earlier times, there is no certain indication of regular distant trade passing through Central Asia before the late Seleucid period. Under the Achaemenians the east–west trade may have taken a more northerly route, as the finds made at Pazyryk in the Altai suggest. Here influence from metropolitan Iran is seen in animal designs and in the horsemen and ornament of the famous knotted carpet, while the embroidery on silk found in the fifth kurgan and the fragment of a bronze mirror from the sixth are no less sure signs of a luxury trade conducted with China around the turn of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. During the troubled centuries which preceded the unification of China in 232 B.C. the military and political involvement of the northern Chinese principalities with mobile barbarian neighbours had cultural consequences which are reflected in the general trend and in some particular motifs of late Chou art. In the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. China had itself contributed something to the art of Central Asia. Thereafter an ill-defined relation of Chinese art to nomad art persists. The Huai style which dominated in metropolitan China from the 5th to the 3rd century B.C. shared with the animal art of the steppes a habit of adding fantastic elaboration to the shapes of real and mythical animals, all shown in flat design. This affinity proclaims China co-heir with Iran of inner Asian tradition rather than recipient of direct Iranian influence. In the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. Chinese ideas are detected in nomad art and equipment, while, as a reflex of such cultural export, China itself assimilated some elements of Scythic art.[2]

In this complex exchange the Ordos region, lying within the great northward loop of the Yellow river, is a special case. Here an enclave of pure steppe art and culture was introduced by Hsiung-nu tribesmen, who were settled there from the 3rd century B.C., or earlier, until their defeat by Shih Huang Ti of Ch'in in 214 B.C. The Hsiung-nu then

[1] Samolin; Pulleyblank, "Chinese and Europeans".

[2] On these early contacts see S. I. Rudenko, *Kul'tura naselenia gornogo Altaya v skifskoe vremya* (Moscow, 1953); *Kul'tura Gunnov i Noinulinskie kurgany* (Moscow, 1962); A. D. H. Bivar, "Trade between China and the Near East in the Sasanian and Early Muslim periods", in W. Watson (ed.), *Pottery and Metalwork in T'ang China* (Percival David Foundation, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 1, London, 1970), pp. 1–8; Christensen, *L'Iran*, 406ff.

moved their headquarters across Mongolia to Noin-ula on the Tola river, where their chieftains' tombs are found to contain objects imported from China as well as others decorated in the nomad style.[1]

In the reign of the Han emperor Wu Ti (140–87 B.C.) the exploration and eventual armed intervention which this monarch undertook in Central Asia marked the beginning of a new epoch in China's relations with her western neighbours. The adventures of Chang Ch'ien, Wu Ti's envoy to the far west, and the report he made on his return have often been retailed, since they are a primary source for an important passage of Iranian history. Chang Ch'ien left China commissioned to seek an alliance with the Yüeh-chih against the Hsiung-nu. In 176 or 174 B.C. the latter had driven the Yüeh-chih far west from their home in the north-west Chinese province of Kansu. In 160 B.C. the Ta Yüeh-chih, or Great Yüeh-chih, presumed to be a major fraction of the expelled tribe, are recorded attacking the Sai-wang near lake Issyk Kul. In 128 B.C. they were found by Chang Ch'ien settled between the river Oxus and Samarqand, that is, in Sogdiana, being apparently in control of Bactria (the Ta-hsia of the Chinese) beyond the river, though not occupying its territory. Wu Ti's earlier policy towards neighbouring minor states with a settled habit of life and ruled by an established line of kings, was to demand their submission and then to allow the ruler to remain as a client of the Chinese court. This was the method he adopted with the kingdom of Tien on his south-west border (modern Yünnan) in 109 B.C. and it was probably what he had in mind for some stable minor state in central Asia, always hoping to exploit the divisive tendencies of the Hsiung-nu nomadic confederacy. This consideration, as well as the possibility of gaining by Yüeh-chih hostility towards the Hsiung-nu (which in the event proved a vain hope) must have been included in the envoy's briefing. Hence Chang Ch'ien paid unusual attention in his report to the towns, the agriculture and other characteristics of settled life to be observed among the two peoples he encountered who answered the requirements of Wu Ti's policy, the Ta-yüan and the Ta-hsia.[2]

[1] Rudenko, *Kul'tura Gunnov i Noinulinskie kurgany*; *Shih chi* ch. 110; *Han shu* ch. 64; on the relation of Chinese to nomadic art style see Watson, pp. 103ff; and *idem*, *Styles in the Art of China* (Penguin Books, London, 1977), pp. 41ff.

[2] The account of Chang Ch'ien's mission is in the *Shih chi* ch. 123, much of it being repeated, with additions, in the *Han shu* ch. 61. See Tarn, 279ff and *passim*; F. Hirth, "The story of Chang K'ién", *JAOS* XXXVII (1917), pp. 89–152 (text and translation); O. Maenchen, "The Yüeh-chih problem re-examined", *JAOS* LXV (1945), 71–81; Pulleyblank, "The Wu-sin and Sakas", pp. 154–60; Wang Ching-ju, "Arsi and Yen-ch'i, Tokhri and

There is no dispute on the identity of Ta-hsia as Bactria, which he reached just after the deposition of its last Greek king Heliocles, and whose capital Bactra (Balkh) he knew as Alexandria (Lan-shih). Ta-yüan, being the later name of Farghāna, is by most scholars taken to be the same country when Chang Ch'ien speaks of it. Its economy and urban populousness yield nothing to Bactria in the account given in Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien's 123rd chapter as it now stands, but some of the distances and directions which appear in the text are difficult to reconcile with a location in modern Farghāna. On this question one school of critics assumes that Chang Ch'ien was mistaken in a detail of geography, part of which is put right in the version of his report included in the Han History, and that Farghāna is still his Ta-yüan. Another school argues for a more easterly position of Ta-yüan, in the region of Kucha in east Turkestan, or even on the windy Pamir. The Kucha theory makes the justifiable assumption that Ta-yüan was for Chang Ch'ien the name of a people, a nomadic tribe originally domiciled well to the east, but which, before the historian's recital of Chang Ch'ien's mission (i.e. in the interval between Chang's return home in 126 B.C. and the composition of Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien's chapter) had moved farther west to occupy Farghāna and Sogdiana, the Yüeh-chih having now advanced southwards into Bactria. The source of subsequent information which, on the latter theory, the historian incorporated in the narrative, may have been the four subordinate envoys whom Chang Ch'ien despatched to the west in 115 B.C., at the time of his mission to the Wu-sun in the Ili valley. According to the Han History these failed to return to China before Chang Ch'ien's death there a year later.[1]

Apart from the problem of Ta-yüan, the inclusion of information available only after Chang Ch'ien's death must be supposed to account for facts pertaining to Parthia which appear in the report, since these imply Parthian dominion on the lower Oxus and as far as the Aral sea, a situation not reached until some years after 128 B.C. Further, the

Yüeh-chih", *Monumenta Serica* IX (Peking, 1944), 81–91; S. P. Tolstov, *Drevnii Khorezm* (Moscow, 1948), 242ff, where the old theory identifying the Yüeh-chih with the Massagetae is discussed. For examples of Wu Ti's formal policy towards submissive neighbours see Kurihara Tomonobu, "Official seals of the Ch'in and Han dynasties recorded in documents", *Studies on the History of the Ch'in and Han dynasties* (Japanese: *Shin-Kan-shi no kenkyū*), Tokyo, 1960.

[1] On the Ta-yüan see Tarn, esp. Appendix 10. The interpretation adopted here is that argued by Pulleyblank, *loc. cit.*; he proposes *Ta Yüan* (dà i̯wan) as transcribing **taxwar*, a basis of Tokharoi. See also A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 138–40. It is the accounts given in the *Han shu* and the *Hou Han shu* which situate the king, and the country, of the Yüeh-chih at Lan-shih.

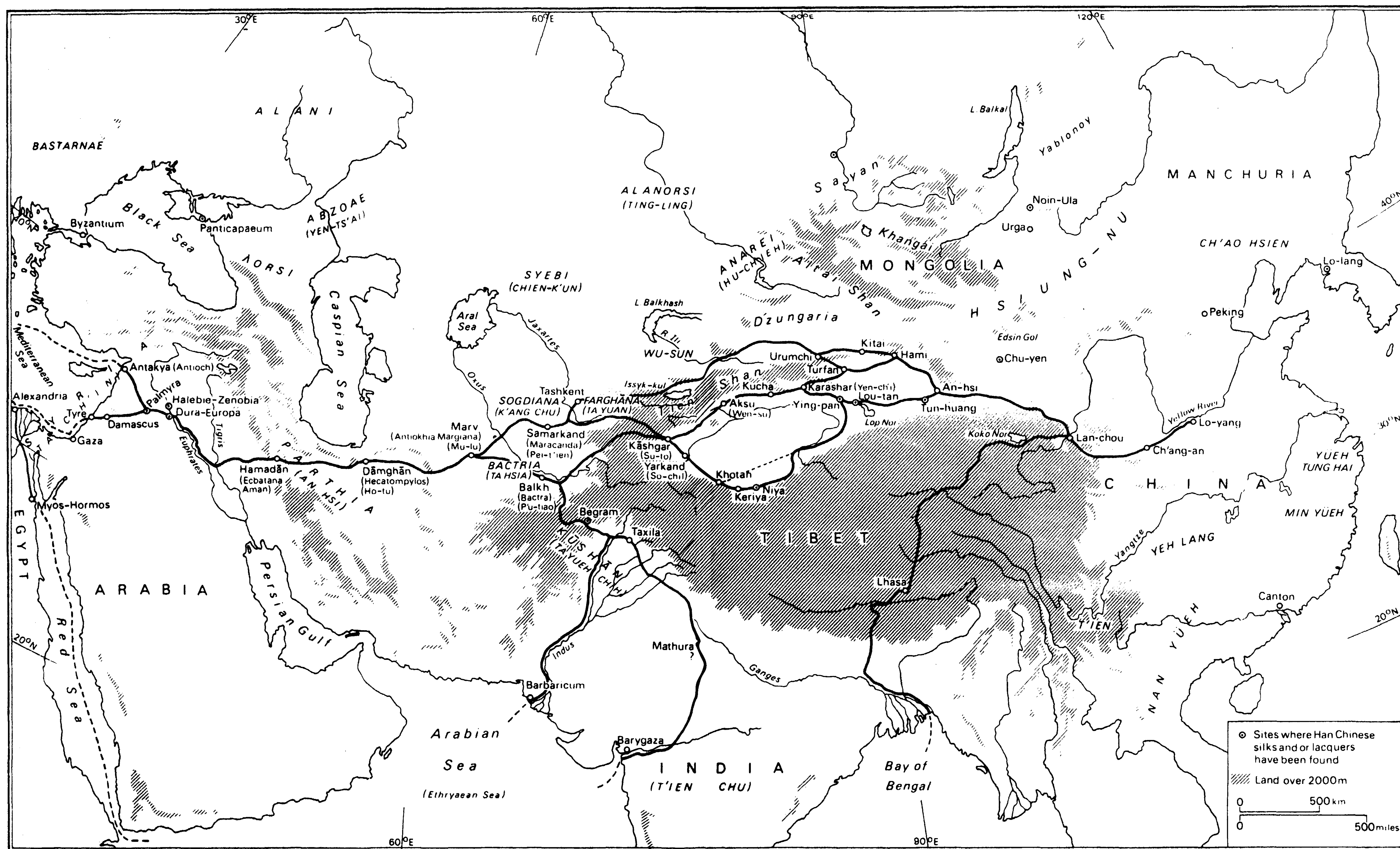
editing necessitated by the later additions may be the cause of a curious feature of the narrative: Chang Ch'ien's apparent failure to record that the Sacaraucae and Massagetae were invading Parthia at the very time of his visit to Bactria. But if he was required particularly to report on established kingdoms as potential buttresses to Chinese policy, the envoy may have dismissed this incursion by Saka, whom he knew to comprise several peoples, as just another case of short-lived turbulence occasioned by an ephemeral alliance of nomads, which was nothing to his purpose. He does not mention the quondam Greek kings either. Parthia was at this time known to the Chinese as An-hsi after its capital Antioch–Marv. For some decades after the fall of the Parthian dynasty the same name was in use for their successors, but thereafter Po-ssŭ, a rendering of Parthian, was used to designate the Sasanian kings and empire.

Within a generation of Chang Ch'ien's journey Parthia and China were in diplomatic relations and a regular trade between them had begun, the first caravan from the east being said to have arrived in 106 B.C., calling at Bactria on the way. If the Wu-sun of the Ili valley were not willing in 115 B.C. to make the alliance against the Hsiung-nu which the Chinese sought they had at least offered safe passage to Chinese merchants. But the Ta-yüan were less well disposed. Shortly after Chang Ch'ien's second mission the Chinese sent several embassies to Ta-yüan, which now may be firmly equated with Sogdiana, requesting tribute of its celebrated horses; these were refused. When a final mission stole some horses and set off for home with them it was overtaken by the troops of the Ta-yüan prince Mu Kua and its members all cut down. In 104 B.C. the emperor Wu-ti despatched his general Li Kuang-li at the head of an army said to be 30,000 strong, which survived the rigours of the march through Central Asia only to be defeated by Ta-yüan not far from the place where the envoys had been murdered. In 101 B.C. an army twice as large was brought again by Li Kuang-li from China and this time succeeded in destroying the Ta-yüan force outside Erh-shih, the capital of their prince Mu-kua. The Chinese then laid siege and eventually the Ta-yüan leaders murdered Mu-kua and parleyed with General Li, agreeing to supply food to his exhausted troops and to hand over horses (some thirty of the special and three thousand of the common breed) on condition that he took his army back to China without attempting to enter the city. The rulers of Ta-yüan thereafter maintained friendly relations with China and ex-

changed regular embassies with her. In their turn Wu-ti's successors until A.D. 73 abandoned attempts at further alliance and dominion in the far west. When in 51 B.C. the Hsiung-nu divided into two hostile camps, the southern Hsiung-nu submitting to China, the immediate incentive for Chinese intervention in Central Asia was temporarily removed.[1]

A Chinese presence in the east of the Iranian sphere was felt again a century later, in A.D. 73, when the cavalry general Pan Ch'ao was despatched to counter the pressure of the Hsiung-nu on the principalities both of the southern and the northern routes. Kāshghar, which had been taken by Kucha with the support of the Hsiung-nu, was recovered, and access to the Terek pass leading into Farghāna was assured for Chinese trade. Pan Ch'ao's arrival at Khotan had coincided with that of Hsiung-nu envoys, but these were worsted, the Khotan ruler deposed and the independent expansionist operations of Khotan brought to an end. It was at this city that Pan Ch'ao, on his way eastwards in obedience to an order recalling him on the ground of expense, decided to disregard the imperial will and to return to consolidate further the Chinese hold on the routes leading westwards through the mountains. In A.D. 78 he occupied Aksu and Uch–Turfan and so controlled the Bedel pass. After crushing rebellions at Kāshghar and Yārkand he moved farther north to secure the Ili valley by a treaty with the Wu-sun. The policy which he had urged on the emperor and now implemented was that of employing the forces of subjected princes against those who still held out. When Karashahr was taken from the Hsiung-nu in A.D. 94 the Chinese aim of confining their great enemy to Outer Mongolia seemed near to being accomplished. It is appropriate that we should find Pan Ch'ao shortly afterwards sending his lieutenant Kan Ying to make contact with Ta-ch'in, the Roman east, through which the last stage of the westward trade-route was known to lie. Entering Parthia, Kan Ying found its king ruling from Hecatompylos, and he noted the country's large population and army. The inhabitants may have deliberately led him astray regarding his route, for instead of directly crossing the Roman frontier on the Euphrates he went to the shore of the Persian gulf, as if to take ship around Arabia. But a terrifying account of the sea voyage to the west so discouraged him that he abandoned his mission altogether. Thus the only official

[1] *Han shu*, ch. 61. Pulleyblank, "Chinese and Indo-Europeans", reviews the question of "divine horses" in China.



Map 11. The Silk Road from China to the Roman Orient.

‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.

attempt made by the Chinese to enter into relations with the chief enemies of Parthia was frustrated, probably to the relief of the Parthians, who can only have been alarmed by Pan Ch'ao's long run of success.[1]

A fragile *pax sinica* subsisted in the Ṭārim through the 2nd century,

[1] *Hou Han shu*, ch. 77.

‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.

punctuated by incursions of the northern Hsiung-nu and by rebellion in which these sometimes took a hand. A virtual reconquest of the Ṭārim was completed by 127, and again in 153 the Chinese position was restored at two extremes of trouble, the Barköl region of the Hsiung-nu and the Khotan state. In 155 a new confederacy formed by the Hsien-pi vanquished the Hsiung-nu and within a decade came to control the

Mongolian zone from Manchuria to Balkash, but from this wide base their razzias southwards appear to have been of less lasting effect than those of their predecessors. In 224 we find the rulers of Lobnor, Kucha and Khotan affirming their allegiance to the Wei state of the now divided China. During the period of ascendancy of the Hsien-pi, and of their successors the Juan-juan, the cities along the trade-routes are rarely named in the Chinese histories. We may surmise that they were not subjected to any lasting external domination, for during the 4th century Chinese influence ceased beyond the borders of Kansu. Cultural contacts to be mentioned later suggest that at this time the journey for merchants and pilgrims between China and the Iranian sphere was still feasible, though the hazards of the way made caravans and travellers fewer than in the heyday of Han power.

In the middle of the 5th century China began to reach out again, as the north-China state of Northern Wei, founded by the T'o-pa Turks, began to assume the traditional posture of a stable China. In 448 the Juan-juan were destroyed, Lobnor brought to heel, and Karashahr and Kucha made tributary to the Northern Wei court. But the Northern Wei government was preoccupied with internal diplomacy and war, and its limited intervention in the west illustrates the axiom that Chinese expansion in Central Asia is in direct proportion to the extent of political unity achieved at home. One consequence of the unification under the Sui, and impressively confirmed shortly afterwards under the T'ang, was a rapid expansion of Chinese power through the Ṭārim basin to the farthest outposts where it had made itself felt in Han times. Between 635 and 648 Yārkand, Khotan, Kucha, Kāshghar, Karashahr and Turfan were brought under Chinese suzerainty, and the stage was set for a revival of east–west commercial and cultural exchange to a degree surpassing all that had occurred before. In the late 650s the king of Ning Yüan (Farghāna) sent an envoy to the Chinese court, and the emperor confirmed the king's authority by a brevet, after which Ning Yüan ambassadors came regularly to Ch'ang-an bringing gifts. Bukhārā sent ambassadors in 618 and 626 and continued with gifts later in the century. In the early 8th century there are records of tribute coming from Samarqand and Maimargh.[1]

[1] The incidence of embassies to China from the west is conveniently analysed in Needham, I, pp. 191ff. Accounts of Central Asian cities and peoples recorded between Han and T'ang are principally in the *Wei shu* (compiled on royal order by Wei Shou in A.D. 551) and the *Chou shu* (compiled by Ling-hu Te-fen *et al.* and presented to the throne in A.D. 636); see H. H. Frankel, *Catalogue of translations from the Chinese Dynastic Histories for the period*

The context of this better realized *pax sinica* in Central Asia makes intelligible the story of an appeal addressed to the Chinese court by the last Sasanian ruler or his son. The record is entirely Chinese and differs in the two sources, the *T'ang history* and the *New T'ang history*. The latter speaks of an embassy sent to Ch'ang-an in 638 asking for help against the Arabs, which the emperor T'ai Tsung refused. After a second vain appeal in 661 Fīrūz (Pērōz), the son of Yazdgard III, came to Ch'ang-an himself in 670–3. According to the *T'ang history* a Chinese force was sent by Kao Tsung with the object of restoring Fīrūz to his father's throne, but returned having got no farther than Kucha. The account adds that Fīrūz took refuge in Tukhāristān with an army of Persians, and that in 708 he again sought refuge in the Chinese capital and was made a military officer of the left.[1] According to the *New T'ang history* the latter part of this story belongs to another Persian refugee, while Fīrūz remained in Ch'ang-an from the time of his first arrival in 670–3, and after a few years' residence was allowed to build a Persian temple there. Fīrūz was appointed governor of Iran by the Chinese emperor, and this hollow title was bestowed again on Fīrūz' son in 707, and on other members of the Persian royal house in 722 and 728, all of these residing in Ch'ang-an and apparently keeping up a pretence of royal diplomacy with the imperial court.[2]

II

Whatever else may be shown to have passed east and west through Central Asia between the 4th century B.C. and the 7th century A.D. there is no question but that Chinese silk was the most important article of trade, and the Silk Road is justly named.[3] The route left China at Tun-huang, having come along the Kansu corridor under the shelter

220–960 (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957); and R. A. Miller, *Accounts of Western nations in the history of the Northern Chou Dynasty* (University of California Press, 1959). Hsüan Tsang's account of his westward pilgrimage, *Hsi-yü-chi*, completed in A.D. 629, is translated by S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London, 1884). For the Chinese presence in eastern Central Asia see W. Fuchs, "Das Turfangebiet: seine äußere Geschichte bis in die T'ang-zeit", *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* N.S. III (1926), 124–66; *Chiu-T'ang-shu* ch. 196; and in western Central Asia, A. Rémusat, *Histoire de la ville de Khotan* (Paris, 1820); and Stein, *Ancient Khotan*; *Chiu-T'ang-shu* ch. 198.

[1] Early in the pre-Han period the army of a state (e.g. of *Chin*) was regarded as composed of two parts, right and left. Whatever the tactical basis of this division, the convention remained in the designation of supreme military commanders, the General of the Left and the General of the Right being theoretically deemed equal. The practical import of the distinction is likely to have varied at different periods.

[2] *Chiu-T'ang-shu* ch. 198; *Hsin-T'ang-shu* ch. 221 (ii).

[3] [See also p. 739.]

of the wall which Wu-ti built to protect it in 113–112 B.C. The northern branch left the wall at the Jade Gate (Yü-mên-kuan), passed near Turfan and Karashahr and then followed the foothills of the T'ien-shan westwards. The southern road started from the Sun Gate (Yang-kuan) and pursued its way generally south-east along the edge of the Tibetan plateau, passing Miran, Niya, Khotan and Yārkand. The roads rejoined at Kāshghar and soon after divided again, one branch going by the Terek pass and through Farghāna to Samarkand, Antioch (Marv), and the other, still aiming at Marv, making a detour to Balkh after crossing the Pamirs by the Tuan-Murun pass a little to the south. It was the latter branch that passed near a stone tower on the Bactrian frontier which is mentioned by Ptolemy. After Marv the road led to the Parthian capital at Hecatompylos, then to Ecbatana (Hamadān) and came finally to the Tigris at Seleucia–Ctesiphon, whence Syria could be reached by a number of routes. The Pamir section was under the control of the Kushāns and their Hunnish successors until A.D. 560, and the trade always passed without hindrance. The section under Parthian and then Sasanian control was also secure, and the chief threat from political unrest lay east of the Pamirs and west of the Tigris.[1]

There can be little doubt that some of the trade went from ports on the Indian ocean (the Barygaza and Barbaricum of "The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea",[2] where transhipment is recorded) in order to avoid the troubles of the Roman East. There is question also of a possible route reaching Persia from the north. The indications of the Pazyryk finds were mentioned earlier. We infer from Aristotle's description of the silkworm that some knowledge of sericulture had reached the west from China by the 4th century B.C. It is arguable that the material itself had come a century earlier to the Achaemenian empire, which might explain the Pazyryk silk plausibly as derived from a passing Sino-Iranian trade. But another possible northerly route follows the valley of the Ili, where good relations between the Wu-sun and the Chinese at an early date would be likely to attract trade to the north of Kāshghar.[3] In the 7th century there is epigraphical proof for the con-

[1] Hudson, pp. 86ff, and Needham, pp. 181ff summarize information on "The Old Silk Road" and its interpretation. The Chinese conciliatory policy towards the Turks of Central Asia was largely dictated by the interest of trade: cf. Medley 1970: "China favoured the western Turks . . . who maintained the southern route on behalf of the Chinese until shortly before the fall of the Sui dynasty, after which they held it in their own interest until the Chinese regained their supremacy in the seventh century."

[2] Tr. W. H. Schoff (New York, 1912).

[3] On the Wu-sun cf. Pulleyblank, "The Wu-san and Sakas"; A. N. Bernshtam, "K voprosu ob Usun, Kushan i Tokharakh", *Sovetskaya Etnografia* 1947.3, pp. 41ff.

signment of a hundred pieces of silk from Kucha to the town of Kung-yüeh near I-ning on the Ili.[1] On the other hand speculation that a Sino-Iranian trade route went far into Outer Mongolia, on the evidence of Hellenistic traits in art, would appear to be unfounded, since there was easy access to Outer Mongolia along the Etzin-gol from the vicinity of Tun-huang. The finds of supposed Bactrian and Syrian cloth of *c.* 100 B.C. at Urga in Mongolia can hardly imply a Sino-Iranian trade passing so far to the north. Nor, in view of the doubts attaching to the Seres when these are first mentioned by Greek and Latin authors, can much reliance be placed on the theory that a journey to their country undertaken by Euthydemus of Bactria at the end of the 3rd century B.C. led him into inner Asia along the ancient route by which Siberian gold was anciently exported.[2]

The secret of silk is said to have been closely guarded by the Chinese. The exact date of its communication to Iran is not certain, but it cannot have been long after A.D. 419, if we may believe the story of a Chinese princess who smuggled the silkworm into Khotan in that year. *Bombyx mori* was known in the Roman empire in 552, and in 562 silk production was made a state monopoly by Justinian. Apart from knowledge of the insect the transference of the techniques of sericulture and weaving must have required the migration of some artisans. In the latter respect the Iranians were perhaps better placed than their neighbours farther west. The event which solved the mystery of silk for Europeans is attributed to "Indian monks" who brought the *bombyx* from Serindia (a term which may only vaguely indicate a region of the Ṭārim); or to a Persian who brought the insect in a hollow cane from the country of the Seres, which in this instance means the Chinese.[3] In Western Asia as in the Roman West silk production began as soon as the techniques were acquired. The tomb of an official at Astana in the Ṭārim, dated to 632, contained silk believed to be of Sogdian origin.[4] The influence of Persian design is manifest in silk damasks preserved in Japan in the Shōsōin. Whether of Iranian or Chinese manufacture these testify to an important export of silk stuffs from the west in the 8th century. Already at an earlier time Persian silks may have begun to compete with the native product among the fashionables of the Chinese court.

[1] *Ssŭ-ch'ou chih lu* (The Silk Road), (Peking, 1972), pp. 6–7.

[2] This is the meaning put by Tarn, p. 109, on Apollodorus' statement that the Greek kings of Bactria campaigned as far east as the territory of the Seres. [See also ch. 19 in this volume, pp. 000ff on Persian trade with the Far East. *Ed.*]

[3] Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, iv.17; Theophanes in K. Müller (ed.), *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum* IV, p. 270; Yule, I, pp. 203–4.

[4] Stein, *Innermost Asia* II, p. 676.

The "Liang history" refers to Persian brocades (*chin*), and the "gold thread weave" of the "Sui history" may mean a Sasanian brocade. Some other terms for textiles which occur in Sui texts have been interpreted as phonetic renderings of Persian words (pl. 48).

If we put aside the rare and exotic items included in the Sino-Iranian trade (in this case it is difficult to distinguish between gifts and commercial goods) and consider those of greater economic importance, the question arises how the accounts were balanced. We do not hear, as is reported by Pliny of the Indian trade, that payment was made in gold, and the few hoards of Sasanian silver coin found in China, dating to the 5th, and late 6th or early 7th, centuries, do not necessarily prove a large transfer of specie. But payment in silver would have suited Chinese fiscal policy well, and the bulk of the coil would have been recast as the current ingots.[1] Some silk damasks eventually went east from western Asia, but it is likely that woollen cloth and glass wares, both from Asian and Roman factories, were the more normal staples of the return trade from the early years of the exchange, although Chinese literature seldom mentions them. Purple-dyed woollen cloth, probably a product of the Roman industry, was found at Lou-lan and dated to about 100 B.C., while woollen rugs (*t'a têng*) mentioned in Han as originating in India, and in the 3rd century as coming from the Roman East, are under the Sui attributed to Persia.[2] In the Sasanian period glass-makers in Babylon could add their products to those of the longer-established factories of Syria and Egypt. But at the Chinese end direct evidence for importation is scanty. While the glass of the Han and later centuries sometimes assumes exotic shapes in small solid articles (all that could be made of it apparently) the majority of such pieces are plainly Chinese. The Chinese seem however to have prized glass above its normal value, and it is sometimes listed among the precious materials offered as tribute from the west. Among beads (which include the inlaid eye-beads well known also in the Near East and in Europe) some are advanced as evidence of importation, while others, containing barium,

[1] Hoards of Sasanian silver coins have been found in China; cf. Hsia Nai in *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao* 1957.2, pp. 49ff, and Liu Yu-ch'un in *K'ao-ku* 1959, pp. 482ff. The treasure of gold and silver vessels found at Ho-chia, Sian, in 1970 contained a coin of Khusrau II, suggesting that such issues remained current in China until the middle of the 8th century.

[2] P. Simmons, *Chinese patterned silks* (New York, 1948); R. Pfister, "Les premières soies sassanides", in R. Grousset (ed.), *Études d'orientalisme publiées pour le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier* (Paris, 1932), pp. 461–79; excavated textiles illustrating the trade along the routes through Central Asia are published in A. Stein's reports (see bibliography), and notably in *Ssŭ-ch'ou chih lu* (The Silk Road). The latter work illustrates many fragments of woollen textiles such as were imported by the Chinese through or from Central Asia.

are thought to be local Chinese products. An Alexandrian glass vase of the 2nd century B.C. was found in Honan. It is likely that the export of glass to the Far East increased greatly from the late 4th century onwards, and among the greenish-blue bottles found in Chinese tombs of the late 5th century some are of recognizable Persian or Syrian origin. A bowl preserved in the Shōsōin in Japan has round cut facets which ally it closely to pieces found in the Gīlān region of north Iran, and these are likely to be of Sasanian manufacture. The Japanese example will have come with the trade of the Silk Road.[1]

Among articles which caught the Chinese imagination but are less likely to have counted seriously in the trade, are precious stones, crystal, turquoise, amber, agate, artificial gems of an unidentified kind, carpets, aromatics, ostrich eggs, coral, byssus, storax, mats, lions, Sogdian mail-armour (perhaps not before the T'ang, though an influence of Iranian armour in the east can be argued for the Han period), and not least the dwarfs, jugglers, acrobats, musicians and dancers who delighted the Chinese court. As recorded in the Chinese histories the majority of embassies between east and west were before 284 and after 643, but in the interim the trade was not so greatly affected. In 455 an embassy from Persia brought rugs, jewels and aromatic substances. Pliny states that Seric iron was better than that made in Parthia, a remark recalling Chang Ch'ien's curious report that from Ta-yüan west to An-hsi: "there is no silk or lacquer and the casting of iron utensils is not known. When some deserters from the company of a Chinese envoy took refuge there they taught the casting of other weapons." Here particular significance attaches to the production of *cast* iron, which was not known at this time in the west, nor indeed learned from the lessons of the Chinese deserters. It appears from its reputation with the Romans that cast iron joined the flow of exports from China in the 1st century B.C., though it is not clear where its superiority lay for the objects that occidentals usually made of this metal at that time. The iron was known to come to the west through Bactria and Parthia, which tends to disprove the theory that Seric iron had its origin in southern India.[2]

[1] R. Pinder-Wilson, "Glass in Asia during the T'ang period", *Percival David Foundation Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia* No 1, p. 62ff; Shinji Fukai, "Sasanian cut-glass bowls in Iran and Japan", in *SPA*, pp. 3268ff.

[2] (a) Pliny (xxxiv. 41. 145) says that the Seres took the palm for the excellence of the iron sent with their "garments and furs". It is not quite certain that he refers to the Chinese – his contemporary Lucan thought that the Seres inhabited the source of the Nile. Tarn, p. 364, no. 4, may be quoted: "Seric iron was called Margian in 53 B.C. because it reached

The reported sea trade of Syria with Parthia and India is thought to have handled Chinese goods, and especially silk, although the histories make no explicit reference to voyages to the far west from Chinese ports. An early close-linked, if not direct, seaborne trade with the west is indicated by the find of a gold medallion with the head and superscription of Antoninus Pius in excavations at Oc Eo in the Mekong delta, accompanied by other objects eloquent of the Indian part in the trade.[1] Ships with Persian-speaking crews sailed the southern seas, docking probably at an unknown port in south Vietnam, as well as at a port near Hanoi. In T'ang times these ships made the whole way to Canton. The land routes between western Asia and China seem to have been travelled mainly by Sogdian merchants, usually in groups (*tui shang*), and Sogdian was the lingua franca. The Wei History, speaking of the Samarkand state, remarks that "all the barbarians' trade is concentrated here". When embassies from this region went to Han China in the 1st century B.C. they no doubt were accompanied by Sogdian merchants, and the "tribute from *K'ang*" recorded by the Chinese need have been no more than the visits of Sogdian merchants with their usual goods. The Sogdians came frequently to Ku-tsang in Kansu, the capital of the small Liang state of the 4th century, and some of them were captured by northern Wei when it annexed Liang in 439. The king of Sogdiana (Su-tê) sent an embassy to Kao Tsung of Wei (452–65) asking to be allowed to ransom the merchants, and this was

Parthia through Marv (Orosius VI.13, and Plutarch, *Lives*, "Crassus" XXIV). The widespread theory that Seric iron came from the Cheras of southern India . . . cannot stand against this fact. Pliny XXXIX. 15 says that Seric iron was better than that produced in Parthia." Cf. W. H. Schoff, "The eastern iron trade of the Roman Empire", *JAOS* XXXV (1915), p. 230.

(b) B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica; Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran* (Field Museum of Natural History Publication 201, Anthropological Series XV.3, Chicago, 1919) remains a standard work on many aspects of the cultural exchange that took place through Central Asia from the earliest times to the middle ages. The importation of plants, aromatics and other precious materials, almost wholly from the west to China, is dealt with in particular detail. A weakness of the evidence lies in the usual impossibility of distinguishing between Persia proper and Iranianized Central Asia as the place of origin, and in the conflation of literary and strictly botanical indications. It is clear that in post-Han times the Chinese were too ready to attribute the introduction of exotica to Chang Ch'ien himself. Some important items, grouped in three periods of introduction to China, are as follows: I. Han period: alfalfa, vine. II. Between Han and T'ang: balsam poplar, coriander, cucumber, jasmine, onion spec., pomegranate, saffron, myrrh, spikenard, storax. III. T'ang period: almond, cummin, date-palm, golden peach, olive, pistachio; asafoetida, indigo, oakgalls.

(c) Under the Sasanians Chinese paper was known to the Persians, but was rare, and reserved for official use.

[1] J. Sauvaget, *Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde*, Paris 1948; J. Harmatta, "Sino-Indica", *AAntASH* XII (1964), p. 1–21.

granted. In the Sui and T'ang periods and possibly earlier the Sogdians had established settlements along both the north and the south trade routes through the Ṭārim, and intermarried with the local inhabitants. Sogdians were present among the Iranians who resided at Ch'ang-an under the T'ang (pl. 45). It is possible that An Lu-shan, the leader of the rebellion that all but overthrew the T'ang in A.D. 756, was the son of a Samarqandī father and a Turkic mother. He was born in eastern Mongolia and is described as a merchants' middleman by profession. Anecdotes were rife on the Sogdians' sharpness: that at birth honey was put in their mouths and gum on their hands, that they learned the trade from the age of five, that on reaching their twelfth year they were sent to do business in a neighbouring state. Probably by the 7th century Persians had joined with Arabs to create the foreign emporium on the Grand Canal at Yangchou mentioned by the New T'ang History. The same source records a disturbance there in 760 in which a thousand of the merchants were killed.[1]

From the T'ang period onwards and probably earlier the term *hu*, originally denoting foreigners from Central Asia in general, appears to be more particularly used for Persians. Some Persian families residing at the Chinese capital had adopted the surname Li. Their riches were proverbial, so that the idea of a "poor Persian" could be listed as a paradox. What we learn of them from the T'ang History, and the New T'ang History, refers for the most part to Persians settled in China after the fall of the Sasanian empire, but what is said then of their activities is no doubt equally true of Persians resident earlier in Chinese cities. Concern with precious stones and rare materials gave some of them an alchemical reputation, and in later literature they might appear with Taoists in quest of the elixir of life. A "Pharmacopoeia of the Western Barbarians" (*Hu pên ts'ao*) published in the 8th century describes the Persians' drugs. As late as the 10th century Li Hsien, the descendant of a Persian family which had settled in China under the Sui, composed a "Pharmacopoeia of foreign drugs" (*Hai yao pên ts'ao*) and was known as a Taoist adept with special skill in arsenical medicines.[2]

[1] *Wei shu*: Shu-te-kuo; Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian colony"; O. I. Smirnova, "Sogdiyskie monety kak novyy istochnik dl'a istorii Srednii Azii", *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* VI (1949), pp. 356ff. The latter author connects the clan name *Chao-wu* with the *γwβw* seen on Sogdian coins. The full account of the Sogdians extracted from Chinese sources is given by Haneda Tōru (Kyō), *Seieki no bunka* (Tokyo, 1948); E. O. Reischaur (tr.), *Ennin's Diary* (New York, 1965), p. 70.

[2] The rôle of Persians in Chinese alchemy is discussed by Needham, pp. 187ff, where the literary sources are indicated.

In the wake of the Iranians came something of their religions. After the banishment of Nestorius from Constantinople in 435 some of his disciples found their way to Persia. When Nestorian Christianity was introduced into China at the beginning of the T'ang dynasty its Syrian missionary O Lo Pên may be supposed to have approached the court, conscious that a religion which had a following among the Uighur Turks of Central Asia must be listened to, and taking advantage of the atmosphere created by a rich Persian community resident at the capital. According to the stele erected in 781 Nestorian churches (*ssŭ*) were in every prefecture by the middle of the 8th century. While other foreign religions introduced into China under the T'ang lack this established evidence for their progress, it is likely that Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism attracted greater interest in intellectual and official circles; both were recognized by the Chinese government and must have seemed particularly deserving of political support as religions of Central Asians, whom the Chinese were ever at pains to conciliate. Zoroastrianism, well established on the frontier as near as Turfan, first appears in China early in the 6th century, when it is spared from a general persecution of foreign religions. If the term "the Heaven-God of the Hu" is correctly interpreted to mean the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians it would appear that the rulers of the northern Chou state in the mid 6th century admitted the Iranian religion to their territory. In the early T'ang period there were five shrines (*miao*) of the Heaven-God in Ch'ang-an, three in Loyang, and others in the western provinces, and now it is clearer that Zoroastrianism is meant. The Chinese themselves were not allowed to participate in any of the foreign ceremonies. The shrines are said to have contained no image and to have consisted of a small room facing west in which Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, Water and Fire were worshipped. Having escaped a persecution by Buddhists in 732 the Zoroastrians succumbed to the xenophobic movement of 845, when their magians were dismissed.

Manichaeism is first mentioned in China in 694 when its dualistic principle was explained to the court. It is likely that Manichaean missionaries were responsible for conveying some astronomical and mathematical ideas to China from the Iranian sphere. An embassy sent in 719 included a *mu-shê*, interpreted to mean a magus and astronomer. Toleration for Manichaeism was prudent so long as the Uighurs were powerful in Central Asia, but with their decline the religion lost its official support and by the mid 9th century it had to go underground. It continued as a secret society for some time and references to it are

found for the next five hundred years. Although its theology based upon the opposition of light and darkness might be thought akin to Chinese dualism, it in fact had nothing in common with the system of *yin* and *yang*. A moralized cosmology of the kind preached by Manichaeans can have found little sympathy in China, if indeed it was intelligible there at all.[1]

In art China experienced the influence of Iran from the 4th century onwards as a more or less direct transmission from the east Sasanian provinces. In the earlier phase the chief vehicle was the Buddhist iconography and its accompanying decorative styles, which had passed through Central Asia to China with increasing effect from the time of the first missionaries in the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. For the Buddhist art of Central Asia a great formative centre in the west was Bāmiyān, in Afghanistan, which lay near to though not within the sphere of Sasanian official art.[2] Here the Graeco-Indian style of Gandharan Buddhism first assimilated some Iranian decorative forms, and then, from about the middle of the 4th century, Iranian pictorial methods supplanted Gandharan models as a source of the new images required by the Mahayanist expansion of the Buddhist pantheon. China was affected partly as sharing in the Iranian transformation of art which took place rapidly in the oasis cities both of the northern and the southern route from about A.D. 400, and partly through direct communication from the west.

The expansion of northern Wei power into Central Asia along the northern route ensured the artistic communication eastwards. A general Iranian influence is seen in the splendid wall paintings of Cave 257 at Tun-huang, which depict the various incidents of the Deer Jātaka. The use of a uniform ground of dark red, the conventional flower sprays evenly spaced on this ground, the fluttering ribbons, crowns and long narrow-sleeved garments in this and other early caves all betoken Persian influence. The habitual Chinese preoccupation with spatial recession is abandoned for clear spacing on a featureless ground. Even some details of painted architecture imitate the Persian model, it

[1] A. C. Moule, *Christians in China before the year 1550* (London, 1930); P. Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Movement in China* (London, 1916); F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge, 1925); Ch'en Yuan, "Huo-hsien-chiao ju Chung-Kuo k'ao" ("The introduction of Zoroastrianism to China"), "Mo-ni-chiao ju Chung-kuo k'ao" ("The introduction of Manichaeism to China"), *Kuo-hsüeh chi-k'an* 1923, 1, resp. p. 27ff and 203ff. (The last two cited by Needham, pp. 128, 264.)

[2] J. Hackin, "Buddhist Art in Central Asia. Indian, Iranian and Chinese influences from Bāmiyān and Turfān" in *Studies in Chinese Art and some Indian Influences* (The India Society London, 1936).

being evident that the structure of Chinese trabeate buildings was little understood by the artists.

In architecture the Chinese could copy little from foreign methods, but it is possible that the ceiling raised into a lantern roof by a corbelling of beams, a design of the greatest convenience in temples, was inspired from Iran, for it was known also at Bāmiyān in Afghanistan.[1] At Tun-huang one may speak of a Sino-Iranian school of painting subsisting from the early 5th until nearly the end of the 6th century, when the style becomes wholly Chinese. At Turfan the mixture of Chinese and Iranian elements lasted until the 10th century, but at Kucha, in contrast to this, art becomes thoroughly sinicized soon after the opening of the 8th century.

A more particular Iranian influence in Chinese Buddhist art, created in a wholly sinicized context, is seen in the design of a Bodhisattva image seated with legs crossed at the ankles, with head ribbons and often swathed in broad crossing scarves.[2] This figure is frequent in the second half of the 5th century in the cave temples cut in a cliff at Yun-kang in Shansi, under the patronage of the northern Wei kings. In cave XVII one such image is a principal, while another, carved in a small niche, is dated to 489 by an inscription which also identifies the subject as Maitreya, the Bodhisattva of the present *kalpa* (cosmic period) due to attain to Buddhahood in the next. The Bodhisattva is represented seated in his paradise, Sukhāvati, located in the Tushita Heaven, where he awaits the arrival of the faithful. Although the cross-ankled posture is known in Gandharan sculpture, it is more probably of Iranian than Indian origin. It occurs at Bāmiyān and at Kïzïl in Turkestān. In China the pose is modified in the 7th century to the so-called European posture, with both legs pendent. At Bāmiyān and in the neighbouring valley of Kakrak, the Bodhisattva might be depicted wearing a crown decorated with three crescents each embracing a circular jewel. This arrangement repeats the crescent and ball ornament placed on the crown of a Sasanian king, the jewel being acceptable to Buddhists as a symbol of the Law, if an explanation was required. In general the shape of the headdress given to the later Bodhisattvas appears to be of Iranian inspiration, as no doubt is also the broad-shouldered and rather straight-lined profile of the whole figure as it was conceived at Yün-kang (pls 42–4).[3]

[1] A. C. Soper, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia", *The Art Bulletin* XXIX (1947 Dec.), pp. 225ff.

[2] Seiichi Mizuno, "Iranian Influence in Buddhist Iconography" in *SPA*, pp. 3249ff.

[3] J. Hackin, "Iranian Influences on Buddhist Art" in *SPA*, pp. 3253ff.

The chief Iranian influence on the iconography of Central Asian and Chinese Buddhism was however of a more general and theological kind. There can be little doubt that the character of the Buddha Amitābha (Mi-t'o-fo) as propagated to east Asia owes much to Iranian concepts of cosmology and divinity: "... as lord of 'boundless light' he suggests Ahura Mazda. As lord of 'boundless life' he bears the same title as Ameretāt, one of the six Mazdean Amesha Spentas, who surround the deity and are in some sense his emanation or attributes." Amitābha's Western Paradise, with its jewelled throne, like Maitreya's Sukhāvati, has its germ in Iranian beliefs, its representation a glorified version of an Iranian royal audience (for such a thing China itself provided no earthly model).[1]

The full impact of this iconography in China follows the end of Sasanian rule, falling in the T'ang dynasty and particularly the first half of the 8th century. It would ensue that the finest Buddhist wall paintings to have survived until recent time, those of the Hōryūji temple in Japan, incorporate much in design and style that is Iranian, although comparison is oftenest made with the Ajaṇṭā murals. Broad analogies apart, the evidence for detailed items borrowed from Iranian lore are rare. One may cite three painted panels preserved in the Shōsōin, certainly T'ang work, showing each an animal beneath the Haoma tree of ancient Iranian tradition.[2] In the branches are hidden figures standing for the ten avatars of Verethraghna, a personification of the tree. It is likely that more was known in China of Iranian story than appears from extant art and writing. A work published in 860 tells how a city was sited and built by one Wu-se-to-hsi, who is plausibly explained as Vištāspa, the legendary founder of Bactria.[3]

The art-historical and archaeological evidence for Sino-Iranian relations, so largely drawn on above, is on many points suggestive rather than conclusive. It calls for critical treatment if significant connection with the metropolitan Sasanian kingdom is to be established. It is often the eastern marches of the kingdom that are in question. Contacts indicated by the shapes of silver vessels point mainly to Sogdiana.[4] One

[1] A. C. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, 1959), p. 141ff, whence the quotation.

[2] P. Ackerman, "Verethraghna Avatars of the Shōsōin Painted Screen Panels" in *SPA*, pp. 3286ff. Cf. also Ryoichi Hayashi, "The Iranian Animal Style on the Treasures of the Shōsōin Repository", *ibid.*, pp. 3275ff.

[3] L. Petech, "Vistāspa e Bactra in un testo cinese", *RSO* XLI (1966), pp. 171–2.

[4] The argument that the earliest Persian metalwork known in the far east was the product of this eastern province is developed in detail by B. I. Marshak, *Sogdiiskoe Serebro* (Moscow, 1971).

The same conclusion is reached by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Iranian silver and influence

would expect the general terminus for the Chinese trade to lie in this frontier province, whether delivered there by Chinese or Sogdian merchants. Consignments for destinations farther west would be re-despatched from Sogdiana, and here also consignments constituting the return trade would be made up (pls 46–7).

Since the oasis cities lining both the northern and the southern route through the Ṭārim were so strongly Iranianized, the art-historian has difficulty in separating what belongs properly to the Sasanian sphere from what more truly represents the local growth of Central Asian culture, in which Iranian elements were combined with others of Turkic and local origin. By disregarding this distinction it is possible to multiply instances of Chinese contact with western tradition into which an Iranian ingredient enters more or less, but the historical moment may be lost. It would be wrong also, for example, to assume from the isolated record of a painter at the Ch'in court in the late 3rd century B.C., hailing from a mysterious but possibly Central Asian state of Chien-chüan, that Sasanian influence lay behind the increasing realism of Chinese painting in the Han period. Similarly, the celebrated artist Wei-Ch'ih I-seng, who at the T'ang capital in the 8th century astonished all by the illusion of solidity he achieved from his works, need not be cited in favour of Sasanian style. I-seng came from Khotan, and seems to stem from a school more influenced by India than Iran.

To illustrate the most significant Sino-Iranian contacts the narrative has been taken necessarily beyond the end of Sasanian rule, into the middle decades of the T'ang dynasty. The latest points that call for notice are to be seen as an aftermath of Sasanian culture, or as the last echoes of Sasanian politics. But the art-historical evidence forthcoming in China, currently multiplied and rendered more precise by archaeological discovery, carries a greater implication. The work in silver and gold, and the textiles, which show the Chinese craftsman at his most receptive to Iranian influence in decorative design, fall rather strictly into the first half of the 8th century, persisting to a time more than a century after the Arab conquest of the Near East. Either this delay marks an Indian summer of the pre-Islamic tradition of Iran lingering in Central Asia, or one concludes that Sasanian art continued to flourish in its home long after the departure of Sasanian kings. The latter may be thought more probable.

in T'ang China", in W. Watson (ed.), *Percival David Colloquy on Art and Archaeology in Asia* No 1 (1970), pp. 9ff. For the sequel in China cf. in the same publication M. Medley, "T'ang Gold and Silver". The largest hoard of Persianizing gold and silver vessels thus far discovered in China is that excavated in 1970 at Ho-chia, Hsian. See W. Watson, *The Genius of China, An exhibition of archaeological finds of the People's Republic of China* (London, 1973) items 305–28.

CHAPTER 14

CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN PARTHIA AND ROME[1]

The Parthians and the Romans were enemies engaged in ruthless and almost perpetual warfare, a life and death struggle which left few opportunities for peaceful contacts. It is not surprising therefore that the most obvious contacts belong to the sphere of military technology and strategy.

In the 3rd century, just when the Arsacid empire gave way to the Sasanians, the historian Herodian summarized in a few words the respective achievements of the two mighty powers, the Romans and the Persians. The emperor Caracalla (188–217), so Herodian tells us, sent a letter to ask for the hand of a daughter of King Artabanus V of Parthia. The marriage union, Caracalla wrote to Artabanus, would bring together the two greatest powers in the world. The proposal was gladly accepted and Caracalla hurried to Parthia where he was received with all due honours. But during the preparations for the wedding feast he managed to kill the unsuspecting and drunken Parthians. The point of this tall story is to reveal to the world that what Caracalla proclaimed to be a great military victory was simple trickery.

This childish story would not be worth quoting were it not for a passage in the alleged letter of Caracalla with the marriage proposal, which obviously reflects current Roman thinking. Herodian says: "His wish was to marry a princess, the daughter of a great king. He pointed out that the Roman and the Parthian empires were the largest in the world; if they were united by marriage, one empire without a rival would result when they were no longer divided by a river. The rest of the barbarian nations now not subject to their authority could easily be reduced, as they were governed by tribes and confederacies. Furthermore, the Roman infantry were invincible in close-quarter combat with spears, and the Parthians had a large force of highly skilled horse-archers. The two forces, he said, complemented each other; by waging war together, they could easily unite the entire inhabited world

[1] This contribution is printed in the form in which it was found among Professor Kurz's papers at his death in 1975. Some extra material he had collected is incorporated in accord with his presumed intentions. Thanks are due to Dr Michael Rogers for checking the proofs. Ed.

under a single crown. Since the Parthians produced spices and excellent textiles and the Romans metals and manufactured articles, these products would no longer be scarce and smuggled by merchants; rather, when there was one world under one supreme authority, both peoples would enjoy these goods and share them in common."[1]

The Parthian empire which the Romans regarded as the second world power was an oriental monarchy.[2] It is important to stress its oriental character in contrast to the hellenized Parthia of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. The ostentatious philhellenism of the earlier period had disappeared. Greek remained for long the language of the inscriptions on the Parthian coins, but in the 2nd century A.D., the language was no longer understood and the coin legends gradually became a meaningless jumble of letters.

This empire flourished by its trade, being the intermediary between China and South Asia on the one hand, and the western world on the other. The letter concocted by Herodian names the two chief articles of trade, spices and textiles. Not all the spices sold to the west belonged to this carrying trade; as we shall see, a condiment like asafoetida was a native Iranian product. The same distinction applies to textiles: a considerable proportion of the trade consisted of Chinese silks, which reached the west via Parthia, but at the same time there was a constant demand for the native Persian stuffs, which had been famous in the west for many centuries.

Two commodities which enjoyed a reputation in Rome were "Parthian steel" (or "Parthian iron") and "Parthian leather". Pliny mentions "Parthian iron" as the second best in the world:[3] it was apparently not Iranian in origin, but an article of trade which came originally from India. Fine leather was imported from the Orient in imperial times, and known as "Parthian"; the later emperors wore knee-length "Parthian boots" of red leather.

[1] Herodian IV. 10 (here quoted from the translation by E. C. Echols). The historical nucleus of the story is told by Dio LXXVIII. I. It is satisfying that the references to Caracalla's "Utopia of a Romano-Iranian Empire" in the first edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1949, p. 125) have been excised from the second (1970, p. 153).

[2] Roman knowledge of the Parthians and their customs is reflected on the few remains surviving in the city of a 2nd-century A.D. triumphal arch commemorating a Roman victory over the barbarians. See F. Cumont, "L'adoration des mages et l'art triomphal de Rome", *Atti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia*, Serie IIa, *Memorie* III (Rome, 1932), pp. 82–105: a useful compendium of information on the representation of the Parthians, on the golden crown as a mark of honour and as tribute and on covering the hands; Cumont demonstrates how the representation of barbarians bringing tribute served as the model for the Adoration of the Magi in Christian art.

[3] Pliny XXXIV. 145.

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGY

Herodian stresses that the Romans were invincible on foot and the Parthians on horseback. What impressed and frightened the Romans was the mobility of their Parthian enemies, especially of the dreaded mounted archers who were able to shoot while riding at full speed. The "Parthian shot" was, and still is, proverbial: the enemy who pretends to flee, and suddenly turns round and aims his deadly arrows at his pursuer. It was as often quoted in literature as depicted in art.

After the disastrous defeat at Carrhae (Ḥarrān) in 53 B.C., the Romans realized the necessity to learn from the enemy and to copy his fighting methods. They did it in their usual way, not by reforming the army, but simply by incorporating into it as auxiliaries native troops with their native weapons.

Already during the last decades of the Roman republic mounted Parthian archers fought under Gaius Crassus.[1] While this was more or less an isolated case, during the empire the *alae Parthorum* formed an integral part of the army.[2] In one instance we hear even of an *ala Parthorum et Arabum*. This was in the 1st century of our era. A tombstone with the figure of an officer belonging to it, found at Mainz in Germany, shows that they were not yet protected by heavy mail.

Authors of late antiquity have left us vivid descriptions of the horror felt by the Romans when they saw for the first time the Parthian archers completely encased in armour.[3] Flexible mail covered every limb, their faces were hidden behind masks, and even the horses were protected by mail.[4] A dazzling sight when seen glittering in the sunlight, these armies appeared to be invulnerable. As soon as the Romans had recovered from the first shock, they did what independently, but more or less at the same time, the Chinese, and later the Arabs, did: they adopted the Persian system of armour for man and horse. We learn from Roman writers that these horsemen were called *clibanarii*.[5] The words *clibanarii*

[1] Appian, *Civil Wars*, IV. 59, 63, 88.

[2] These consisted of native Parthians who had either sided with the Romans or been conscripted. On the other hand, the Legio Parthica was so named because it fought in Parthia.

[3] Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* IX. 14ff.; Ammianus Marcellinus XXIV. 6. 8.

[4] The latter was not a new invention, as armour for horses had been in use in Persia since Achaemenian times, originally for the horses which drew the war chariots.

[5] The *Historia Augusta* contends that *clibanarii* was their Persian name (Aelius Lampridius, *Severus Alexander*, LVI. 5, in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* II; but cf. Ammianus Marcellinus (XVI. 10. 8) where *Persae* was inserted into the text by a 16th-century editor); this has caused much speculation about a possible Iranian term underlying the Latin; see E. Herzfeld,

and the more common *cataphractarii* were used as synonyms, both for the Persian and the Roman armoured cavalry units, which in appearance anticipated the medieval knights. A third name, and one in which their eastern origin is particularly manifest, was *Parthusagittarii*, a detachment of whom was stationed in Egypt in the 4th century.[1]

Gradually the Parthian tactics became the standard method of warfare in the Roman empire. When in the 6th century A.D. Procopius of Caesarea compared the fighting methods of the Homeric age with those of his own time, he stressed the contrast between the archaic warriors on foot and the modern "expert horsemen, who are able without difficulty to direct their bows to either side while riding at full speed, and to shoot an opponent whether in pursuit or in flight".[2]

More to the sphere of what would now be termed "psychological warfare" belong the Persian "scythed chariots", fast-moving chariots with rotating scythes designed to mow down the ranks of the enemy. Their frightening effect must always have been greater than their efficiency, and it was apparently the terror they inspired which kept them in use from Achaemenian to Parthian times. Hellenistic rulers like Antiochus Eupator (*c.* 173–162 B.C.) made use of them, as we learn from the Bible,[3] but not so the Romans. When in the 4th century of our era a Latin writer tried to reform the Roman army and much else besides, he recommended strongly the introduction of this old Persian device.[4]

To inspire terror in the ranks of the enemy was the original purpose of the Parthian dragon ensigns which were made of some light material so that they would move in the breeze like enormous serpents.[5] They were soon taken over by the Roman legions where special *draconarii* were in charge of them. The attention paid to these "dragons" by modern historians of aeronautics is not based on any facts; they were neither Chinese gliding kites nor were they filled with hot air and thus the forerunners of modern balloons.

What the Romans admired in their enemies, and tried to learn from them, was the mobility of their strategy, the surprise movements of a

Am Tor von Asien (Berlin, 1920), p. 87; P. Peeters, "L'église géorgienne du Clibanion au Mont Admirable", *AB* XLVI (1928), 268; and F. Rundgren, "Iranische Lehnwörter im Lateinischen und Griechischen", *Orientalia Suecana* VI (Uppsala, 1957), 50. A different explanation was suggested by W. B. Henning, "The monuments and inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak", *Asia Major* II (1951–2), 162.

1 H. I. Bell, V. Martin, E. G. Turner and D. van Berchem, *The Abinnaeus Archive* (Oxford, 1962), p. 9.

2 Procopius, *History of the Wars* I ("The Persian War"), i. 14.

3 2 Maccabees XIII. 2.

4 E. A. Thompson (ed. and tr.), *A Roman reformer and inventor. De rebus bellicis* (Oxford, 1952), p. 116 (XII. 2).

5 Lucian, *How to write history*, XXIX.

fast cavalry. For the Parthians it was exactly the opposite. They were deficient where the Romans excelled, in the technique of static warfare and especially the art of fortification. Like the Romans they were quick to learn from their enemies.[1]

TECHNOLOGY

The Romans were outstanding in many aspects of civil engineering and particularly in building technology. In the early 3rd century Shāpūr I called in Roman masons to erect the large dam at Shushtar which served as a reservoir of water for irrigation. The ancient Persian tradition of large-scale hydraulic engineering was thus combined with the unique Roman experience in masonry.[2] The dam is still called Band-i Qaisar.

While the Romans were unsurpassed as far as building methods were concerned, they were the pupils of the Persians in the fields of irrigation and agriculture. Here three particularly far-reaching inventions – the water-wheel, the water-mill and the windmill – were probably or certainly made in Iran. The *na'ūra* or "Persian wheel" is a wheel (or, in a variant, an endless chain) with pots or buckets attached to it. The rotation of the wheel brings the water collected at the bottom to the top. It became known in the western world as well as in China about the beginning of our era and the Iranian countries seem to have been the centre of diffusion. Laufer advanced arguments in favour of Sogdiana as its original home, while Needham thought that it was invented in India. It is worth mentioning that the Manichaeans conceived the journey of the soul towards the sun as modelled on the rotation of the na'ūra. The water-mill, a na'ūra with paddles and operated by a current of water, may also be of Iranian origin. There can be no doubt that the windmill is a Persian invention, but it reached the western world only in the late Middle Ages.

Road-building was, of course, a great Roman achievement, and it is not surprising that the late Latin word *strata* for a paved road (our word "street") is found as a loan word in Middle Persian, as well as in a number of other eastern languages.[3]

[1] Vegetius Renatus, *De re militari* III, tr. J. Clarke in T. R. Phillips (ed.) *Roots of Strategy* (London, 1943), pp. 89–90.

[2] Our source of information (Ṭabarī) is comparatively late, but trustworthy; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 33; U. Monneret de Villard, *L'arte iranica* (Milan, 1954), p. 93.

[3] H. W. Bailey, "Iranica II", *JRAS* 1934, p. 504; *idem*, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-century Books* (Oxford, 1943), p. 115. On another loan word, this time from the military sphere, Parthian *stratywt* from Greek *στρατιώτης*, see Henning, "Two Manichaean Magical Texts", *BSOAS* XII (1947), p. 47n4.

In antiquity the post, i.e. the state organization for transmitting orders from and news to the court, was more or less a military institution and based on statute-labour. That the Roman *cursus publicus* followed the pattern of the Persian state post has as often been stated as denied. That the Persians were the first to create such an institution is undeniable; it was, however, already taken over in hellenistic Egypt. The Islamic world followed not the Sasanian, but the Romano-Byzantine organization, even taking over its Latin name (*barīd* from *veredus* "courier's horse").

CULTIVATED PLANTS

The Greco-Roman picture of the Persians as a nation of fierce and indomitable warriors contrasts strangely with another stereotype, the Persians as past masters of the art of refined living, of *luxuriose vivere*,[1] and especially as unsurpassed gourmets. The refinements of Persian cooking were already mentioned by Xenophon, who must have had first-hand experience,[2] and we know from a Pahlavi text, "King Khusrau and the Page", that the study of gastronomy formed part of the general education of a Persian boy. The Roman cookery book of Apicius has preserved for us the recipe for cooking "kid or lamb in the Parthian manner"; ground pepper, rue, onion, stoned damsons and a small quantity of asafoetida were some of the ingredients. Another dish in Apicius is "chicken in the Parthian manner" which received its undoubtedly strong flavour from asafoetida.[3]

Asafoetida, which obviously played such a part in Persian cooking, is a resin which was much appreciated as a condiment in spite of the unpleasant smell which earned it its various uncomplimentary names (Devil's Dung, etc.).[4] The Romans received it from Persia and called it *laser Parthicum*, or *laser Cyrenaicum vel Parthicum*. The latter name refers to the fact that the once famous *silphicum*, the main product of Cyrenaica, had become excessively rare in Roman times, but the Parthian product was regarded as an adequate substitute. Asafoetida is still listed in the pharmacopoeia, but its medical use is a later development.

[1] Cornelius Nepos, *Vitae* VII (Alcibiades), 11.

[2] *Cyropaedia* VIII. viii. 16.

[3] Apicius, *The Roman Cookery Book*, ed. and tr. B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum (London, 1958), pp. 151, 191. It should, however, be pointed out that in the recipe for lamb the reading of the manuscripts is *pasticum*, which the editors have corrected to *parthicum*; cf. E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Das Kochbuch der Römer* (Zurich, 1970), p. 81.

[4] B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica* (Chicago, 1919), pp. 353ff.

Rhubarb, on the other hand, which is now considered a table delicacy, was in antiquity and the Middle Ages esteemed exclusively for its medical properties. It became known to the Greco-Roman world in the 1st and 2nd centuries of our era. It came not directly from Iran, but from "beyond the Bosporus", a part of the world where Iranian influence was particularly strong.[1] Its Greek and Roman names (*rheon*, *rha*, etc.) reflect its indigenous designation (Mid. Pers. *rēvās*).

Asafoetida and rhubarb were not the only cultivated plants which the Romans brought from Persia to the western world. We learn from Pliny that the best kind of walnut was called by the Greeks "Persicum"; the Romans spread its cultivation all over Europe.[2]

The Persian pistachio became known to the Greeks in hellenistic times, but it was first planted in Italy in the 1st century of our era. Although the tree and its fruit are still called by its Persian name (modern *pista*), it seems that the tree was introduced into Italy not directly from Persia, but via the Near East.[3]

Two other introductions of lasting effect were the peach and the apricot. Both were of Chinese origin and both remained unknown to the Greeks. The Romans learned about them from the Persians and introduced them from Persia and Persian Armenia.

We are especially well informed about the introduction to the west of the peach (*Amygdalus persica*). Pliny says, "As the name of the peaches (*Persica*) shows, they are foreign to Asia [Minor] and to Greece, and have been introduced from Persia." The tree was then a newcomer to Italy; no other fruit was sold at such a high price. Soon various species were grown and experiments were made with grafting. The Greeks called the tree *Melea persike*, but already in the 2nd century A.D. Galen remarked that the name had been shortened to *Persike*. The same happened in Latin. Its modern name in most European languages still recalls its Persian origin.[4]

Less circumstantial are the reports about the introduction of the apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*), which is believed to have come via Armenia.[5] Galen states that the apricot was not known to previous generations; in his time the tree as well as the fruit was called *πρεκόκκιον*, which is

[1] Dioscorides III. 2; also Pliny (XXVII. 128) says, "ex regionibus supra Pontum"; Laufer, *op. cit.*, pp. 547ff; Pauly, *s.v.* Rhabarber.

[2] Pliny XV. 86. Laufer, *op. cit.*, pp. 254ff.

[3] Nöldeke, "Persische Studien II", *SWAW* CXXVI. 12 (1892), 43. Laufer, *op. cit.*, pp. 246ff; Pauly, *s.v.* Pistazie.

[4] Pliny XV. 44. Laufer, *op. cit.*, p. 539; Pauly, *s.v.* Persica.

[5] Laufer, *op. cit.*, p. 539.

the Latin word *praecocium* "early ripe". The cultivation of the tree and its distinctive Latin name were taken over from the Byzantines by the Arabs (*barqūq*),[1] and later from the Arabs by western Europe where its modern names (apricot, abricot, etc.) clearly reflect its chequered history by combining its original Latin designation with the Arabic definite article.

On the other hand, the hazelnut came to Persia from the west and still preserves its foreign name, *funduq* (from ποντικόν). As the Persians would not have used a Greek adjective to refer to the Pontic regions, which belonged to their empire, the hazelnut and its name must have been brought to them by Aramaean or Arabic intermediaries.[2]

RELIGION

The Persian influence on Roman religion would be enormous, were we allowed to call Mithraism a Persian religion. It has very often been claimed to be one, as it centres on the cult of an ancient Iranian god. But if ever a Persian had been initiated into the mysteries of Mithraism, it is doubtful if he would have recognized anything familiar to him apart from the name of the god and one or two words of its terminology. Mithraism is a western mystery cult which sprang into existence in the last century B.C. and flourished during the first centuries of the Roman empire. Its adherents were almost exclusively small groups in the Roman army. Renan's famous and too-often quoted dictum "If the world had not become Christian, it would have become Mithraic", implying that at some stage in its history Mithraism was a serious rival to Christianity, is an exaggeration.

The size of the sanctuaries shows that the local communities must have been comparatively small. Were it a truly eastern religion, one would expect a particularly strong Iranian element in the sanctuaries of Mithras the nearer we move eastward towards the Persian frontier. Nothing of that kind is noticeable. In the Mithraeum at Dura-Europos some local features are obvious; one of the inscriptions is in Palmyrene and the local Parthian style manifests itself in a fresco painting with Mithras as a hunter, as well as in the cult reliefs; but the latter copy the fixed western prototypes, and in all essentials this sanctuary conforms

[1] Originally the apricot, but the word is now used for yellow plums.

[2] Cf. V. Minorsky, "A Greek Crossing on the Oxus", *BSOAS* xxx (1967), 50; and I. Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* I (Vienna and Leipzig, 1928), 617.

to those which we find everywhere that Roman soldiers had been stationed.[1]

The Greek and Roman image of Persian religion and sacred wisdom was largely determined by an enormous body of occult literature written in Greek, in which Babylonian magic and astrology appeared in Persian garb. Already in the time of Pliny a considerable number of books were in existence, the alleged author of which was Zarathustra. Later centuries have added to this ever growing corpus of books on witchcraft, divination, astrology and magical plants and stones. Nothing remains in it of the true Zarathustra, who has become the embodiment of Ahrimanian practices, of the powers of evil. No wonder that the Persian priest, the *magus*, gave his name to magic.

The interest of the classical world in the religion of Persia was immense; even today the scattered references in Greek and Latin authors and the fragments from lost works constitute a considerable body. But it seems that nobody in antiquity ever tried to separate the true from the fabulous, the orthodox from the heretical, or even Persian religion from Babylonian occultism. It would have been easy enough to collect correct information, but hardly anybody made the attempt,[2] and thus the information provided by Greek and Roman writers gives a picture of utter confusion.

On the other hand, the pseudo-Persian astrological literature of the Parthian period prepared the way for the influx of Greek astrology in the Sasanian period, and its incorporation into the Zoroastrian scriptures.[3]

[1] For a more detailed discussion of the influence of Iranian religious thought on the west see Ch. 22. Ed.

[2] Strabo (xv. 3. 15) mentions the fire temples in Cappadocia, which he had seen himself.

[3] Cf. Henning, "Astronomical chapter"; MacKenzie, "Astrology in the Bundahišn". Ed.

CHAPTER 15

BYZANTIUM AND THE SASANIANS

I

The nearly four centuries of Sasanian rule which separate the accession of Ardashīr I, in the twenties of the 3rd century A.D., from the fall of Yazdgard III, in the middle of the seventh, have long been viewed as a period of bitter enmity between the Iranian and Roman empires. The rise of the Persian Sasanian dynasty has traditionally been interpreted as the victorious reaction of Oriental resentment against the compromises of the over-hellenized Parthian Arsacids. This interpretation reflects the traditional claim of the Sasanians themselves, that they were the descendants of the ancient kings of Iran, and the notions of the contemporary Romans, who likewise saw the new dynasty as the heir of the Achaemenians, the traditional enemies of the Classical world and hence of themselves.[1] Despite these overt proclamations of hostility, the two empires survived side by side as acknowledged equals, and the ambiguity of this situation has been reflected in modern scholarship as well. In recent times, a number of scholars, while recognizing the endemic antagonism of the two rivals, have gone on to argue for striking similarities and consequently for reciprocal influence in the court ceremonials, art, military, legal, fiscal, and administrative institutions of Byzantium and Iran. Some have even gone so far as to consider seriously the claim occasionally made by mediaeval sources that certain of the later Sasanian rulers: Yazdgard I, Khusrau I Anūshīrvān, and especially Khusrau II Parvēz had secretly been converted to Christianity, and to see an irresistible trend toward monotheism in Iran due to Christian influence but ultimately destined to serve the cause of Islam.[2]

In view of the ambivalent quality of the evidence and of the fact that almost all the points of resemblance and mutual influence are still being seriously challenged, where they have not been rejected outright; finally, because influence has too often been postulated on the basis of

[1] *Kārnāmag* I. vi; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 1–3; Cassius Dio LXXX. iii. 4; Herodian VI. ii. 7.

[2] Sebēos, *Héraclius* ii; John Mamikonian, "Histoire de Daron", in Langlois, *Collections des Historiens* I, p. 363; John the Kat'ołikos, *Histoire d'Arménie*, ix; John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, xcv; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* VII. viii; Fredegarius IV. ix; N. Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, pp. 113, 235, 240, 243ff., 248; cf. however, Widengren, *Religions*, p. 273.

logical similarities rather than on demonstrable historical contact; many aspects of Byzantine–Sasanian relations must perforce remain open at the present time. The entire question should be reviewed cautiously so as to take stock of our knowledge before proceeding any further into hypothesis, no matter how tempting. It seems wisest, therefore, to advance step by step clearing the ground as we go. First, to trace the possible channels of transmission for techniques and ideas from one realm to the other. Then, to examine the evidence that the traditional enemies were acquainted with each other's customs and institutions and that they acknowledged their mutual existence. Only at that point should we be able to raise the question of the demonstrability and degree of reciprocal influence.

Least often considered, the existence of contacts and means of transmission is the aspect of the problem most easily documented. There can be little doubt that enmity did not isolate the two empires from each other. The frontier was gradually rigidified over the centuries through the elimination of the hybrid semi-autonomous Syro-Mesopotamian border states, such as Palmyra, Ḥatra, and Edessa by the end of the 3rd century, through the partition of the buffer kingdom of Armenia in 387, and the final absorption of the autonomous satrapies along the Euphrates–Arsanias, as a result of Justinian's restructuring of the administration of his Armenian territories in 536.[1] Similar results were obtained through the emperor's reconstruction of the elaborate system of border fortifications and the Persian counter-measures recorded in Procopius' contemporary treatise on the imperial "Buildings". Nevertheless, this gradual tightening never achieved anything approaching a hermetic separation. Warfare in the period with which we are concerned was not a matter of static operations but of fluid raid and counter raid which carried the Persian armies to Antioch, Jerusalem, and the suburbs of Constantinople, and Byzantine retaliations to the vicinity of the Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon. Hence, both armies had ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with enemy territory. As a consequence of the fortunes of war, the intermediary border zone, including the frontier cities of Dārā, Amida, and Nisibis, as well as a considerable portion of bisected Armenia, found itself alternately under Persian and Byzantine domination. A common language – Armenian in the north, Syriac in the south – and identical customs prevailed on either side of the frontier, linking together related populations split asunder by

[1] *Corpus Juris Civilis*, Novella XXXI; Gagé, pp. 71, 85ff.

political accidents. The Syriac-speaking bishops of imperial Mesopotamia or Osrohene understood their Persian counterparts in Nisibis or Seleucia–Ctesiphon far better than their Greek colleagues in whose councils they could participate only through interpreters.[1] So fluid were parts of the border until the implementation of Justinian's extensive programme that Procopius could still recall a time when "the inhabitants of this region, whether subjects of the Romans or of the Persians, [had] no fear of each other . . . they even intermarry and hold a common market for their produce and together share the labours of farming".[2] Subsequent agreements steadily restrained additions to existing fortifications.[3]

Beyond the immediate frontier zone, superficial knowledge was supplemented by exchanges of population. Prisoners were ransomed during periodic truces and peace negotiations. Vast numbers of Syrians were uprooted by Shāpūr I, Shāpūr II, and Khusrau I to be forcibly resettled in the new cities of Gundēshāpūr or Veh–Ardashīr which required a skilled population, while silk workers ruined by the state monopoly in the days of Justinian are said to have migrated voluntarily to Persia in search of employment, and other artisans were sent by the Byzantine emperor himself to work on the palace of Ctesiphon.[4] Greek mason's marks on the monuments of Shāpūr I's residence at Bīshāpūr attest the presence of such workmen, and the descendants of deported artisans and traders were occasionally to reach positions of considerable importance in subsequent centuries.[5] Persian mercenaries were to be found in the imperial armies, and the presence of Mazdeans on Byzantine territory is revealed by the clauses guaranteeing their religious freedom incorporated in peace treaties.[6] As for Christian refugees, persecution drove them from both sides of the frontier at the mercy of recrudescences of Zoroastrian intolerance or of enforced Constantinopolitan official orthodoxy directed against dissident heretical groups.[7]

The status of foreigners was not restricted to the lower strata of society but reached all the way to court circles where they might affect

[1] Jones, pp. 991–4, 1001.
[2] Procopius, "Buildings" III. iii. 9.
[3] Procopius, "Persian War" I. ii. 15; *idem*, "Buildings" II. i. 5; John of Ephesus, *Historia* VI. xxxvi.
[4] Ammianus Marcellinus XX. vi. 7; Procopius, "Persian War" II. xiv. 1; *idem*, "Anecdota" XXV. 26; Theophylakt Simokattes V. vi. 10; Pigulevskaia, *Villes*, 168, 171, *et al.*
[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 151; Pigulevskaia, *Villes*, pp. 161, 236–8.
[6] Jones, pp. 291, 619; Menander, p. 213; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 288.
[7] Labourt, pp. 117, 131–40, *et al.*

government policy, be it as Persian palace attendants, officials and senators at Constantinople, or as refugee Pers-Armenian nobility officially received on Byzantine territory, or through the quasi-monopoly on the office of royal physician at Ctesiphon held by Christians, many of whom were imperial envoys, despite the scriptural strictures against foreign healers preserved in the *Dēnkart*.[1] The presence of Christian wives in the harem of the king of kings and the asylum granted by Khusrau I to the pagan philosophers driven from Athens by Justinian's closing of the Platonic Academy in 529 are balanced by the welcome extended at the imperial court to Sasanian pretenders or to the distinguished ecclesiastical scholar, Paul the Persian, who expounded his doctrinal views in the presence of the emperor Justin I and instructed high Byzantine officials before his return to his native land, presumably to assume the function of metropolitan of Nisibis.[2]

Additional means of communication were provided by periodically re-confirmed trade agreements. These affected most particularly the all important trade in Chinese raw silk, required for the Byzantine luxury industries supplying the court, over which the Sasanians kept absolute monopoly, despite various imperial diplomatic attempts to by-pass their control, until the silk cocoons were finally smuggled into Syria and acclimatized there after 552.[3] To be sure, these contacts were normally reduced to a few frontier cities in which the customs bureaus were located and duty collected: Callinicum on the Roman side, Nisibis in Mesopotamia and Artaxata of Armenia for the Persian territory, and merchants were forbidden to circulate elsewhere for security reasons.[4] Even so, some relations with the natives must have been established, since in the 6th century Byzantine agents acted in conjunction with Persian traders. At a more official level, the peace treaty of 561 stipulated for joint commissions supervising cases of contraband or international litigations.[5]

As we should logically expect, the closest relations were maintained between the Christian communities flourishing not only in the border districts, but in most Iranian cities as a result of the Sasanian extensive

[1] Jones, pp. 135, 552, 567; Labourt, pp. 219ff; *Dēnkart* VIII. 37. 14.

[2] Agathias II. xxviii–xxxi; Mercati, p. 17; Labourt, p. 167; Vööbus, *School of Nisibis*, pp. 152–3, 170–2, *et al.*

[3] Procopius, "Persian War" II. xxv. 1–4; *idem*, "Gothic War" IV. xvii. 1–7; Pigulevskaia, "Torgovlia shelkom", pp. 187–8. [See further pp. 547ff in this vol. on silk trade.]

[4] *Corpus Juris Civilis, Codex Justinianus* IV. 63. 4; Petrus Patricius, "Fragmenta" xiv; Menander, p. 212; Procopius "Anecdota" xxv. 13–26; Jones, pp. 826–7.

[5] John of Ephesus, "Lives" xxxi; Menander, pp. 212–13.



Map 12. The Byzantine–Sasanian borderlands.

re-settlement policies. Mesopotamian bishops were regularly used as plenipotentiaries by both sides and seized the occasion of ransoming their coreligionists and of maintaining their contacts with communities lying over the border.[1] Christian clerics from Persia such as the future patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Mar ʿAba, the creator of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Maštocᶜ, or the Armenian savant, Ananias Širakacᶜi, travelled to Constantinople to learn Greek and perfect their education.[2] Meanwhile, the Orthodox, Nestorians, and Monophysites travelled back and forth proselytizing and ordaining bishops for foreign sees.[3] We have already noted that persecuted minorities systematically sought haven in enemy territory. The most significant such move from an intellectual point of view resulted from the closing, ordered on doctrinal grounds by the emperor Zeno in 489, of the great theological "School of the Persians" located at Edessa. The imperial decree directed against the spread of Nestorian beliefs unacceptable to the Byzantine court shifted the intellectual and spiritual centre of Nestorian Christianity to Persian Nisibis, where the exiled scholars settled to re-create their famous seat of learning, to translate Greek religious and philosophical texts, and to found local schools throughout the area. Of similar importance was the great medical school founded by Nestorian refugees at Gundēshāpūr, which was to outlive the Sasanian state.[4] The ties linking the Christian communities together were so close that they repeatedly led the Persian authorities to regard them, probably with good reason, as potentially disloyal nests of spies and imperial informers. All the repeated attempts of the official Nestorian Church of Persia to dissociate itself from Byzantium and stress its disagreements with Constantinopolitan doctrine, all the protestations by Persian church councils of their loyalty to the king of kings failed to break altogether the accepted equation of Christian with Byzantine supporter and to disabuse the Sasanian authorities. Persecution normally followed the resumption of hostilities between the two empires.[5]

[1] *Synodicon Or.*, pp. 255, 256, 276–7, 293, 532–6; Evagrius v. xix; Menander, pp. 258–9; Theoph. Sim. IV. xiv; Anonymous Guidi, pp. 18–19; Labourt, pp. 87, 124, 242–3; Garsoïan, "Nersēs", "Hiérarchie chrétienne", *passim*.

[2] *Liber Turris*, p. 44; Cosmas Indicopleustes II, p. 24, VIII, pp. 315–16. Koriwn, "Biographie de Mesrob", in Langlois, *Collection* II, p. 12; Abeyan, I, p. 395; Vööbus, *School of Nisibis*, p. 162, *et al.*

[3] Labourt, p. 124; Honigmann, *Evêques*, pp. 4, 69.

[4] Vööbus, *School of Nisibis*, *passim*; Garsoïan, "Armenia", pp. 347–8; Pigulevskaia, *Villes*, pp. 246–7; Labourt, pp. 140–1, 289–301; Christensen, p. 242.

[5] *Synodicon Or.*, pp. 256, 258, 260–1, 276, 293–4, 318, 320, 334, 340, 390–1, 456, 461, 470–1, 551, 580–1, 585–6; Labourt, pp. 110–18, 126–8, 231, 347; Widengren, *Religions*, pp. 312, 314; Garsoïan, *loc. cit.*

At the highest official level, reciprocal contacts were maintained by means of an elaborate diplomatic protocol. Embassies moved constantly back and forth not only to discuss truces and negotiate peace treaties, but also to bring formal notification of new accessions even in time of war. These ambassadors were normally received with elaborate courtesy, so that a failure to observe the normal ceremonial was regarded as a deliberate act of defiance.[1] The negotiations often took place on the border, but a clause of the peace treaty of 561 stipulated that envoys should be sped on their way by means of the public post system maintained by both realms, and distinguished personages such as Khusrau I's representative, Yazd-Gushnasp, or the Byzantine master of offices, Peter the Patrician, were singled out for special favour at the court of the sovereigns to whom they were accredited.[2] Cooperative action was taken by bi-partisan trade and judicial commissions, and provisions were made for the joint defence of the Caucasian passes against the incursions of northern nomads threatening both realms. Bilingual corps of interpreters verified the accuracy of the texts of treaties consigned to both powers. The glimpse we are given into the make-up of the frontier commissions indicates that they provided a common ground where local dignitaries including the Persian governor, the Byzantine commander in chief of the district, and local bishops might meet to settle points of disagreement, necessarily becoming acquainted in the process.[3] The closest and best example of bilateral cooperation is afforded by the sojourn of Khusrau II on Byzantine territory, when the fugitive prince met with an honourable reception and support, exchanged reciprocal courtesies with the emperor Maurice, and was ultimately set back on his throne through joint military operations. In sign of gratitude for the help he had received, the young Persian king was to dedicate gifts bearing Greek inscriptions at the imperial shrine of Saint Sergius of Resapha through the intermediary of the bishop of Antioch, who accepted these offerings with the permission of Constantinople.[4]

Under these circumstances, there seems to be no warrant for treating

[1] Menander, *passim*; *Chronicon Paschale*, *passim*; Amm. Marc. XVII. v. 1–2, 15; xiv. 2–3; Procopius, "Persian War", I. ii. 15; Theoph. Sim., III. xii; Sebēos, *Héraclius*, xxiv; John of Ephesus, *Historia* VI, xxi.

[2] Menander, p. 212, clause 3; Procopius, "Gothic War", IV. xv. 19–20, *et al.*

[3] Procopius, "Persian War" I. xvi. 6; Theoph. Sim. III. ix. 11; Menander, pp. 213–14; Theophanes I, p. 245, 19–22; *Synodicon Or.*, pp. 532–3, 536.

[4] Goubert, pp. 149–50; Evagrius, *Historia* VI. xxi; Theoph. Sim. V. i. 7–8; Peeters, "Ex-voto", *passim*.

the Byzantino-Sasanian epoch merely as one of hostile isolation and continuous wars. No doubt, the instances of direct contact which we have enumerated were largely limited to the frontier zone or to official exchanges and to the Christian communities. Travel within the two empires was severely restricted and supervised even in the case of ambassadors or of Khusrau II himself, whose attendance at all times by an imperial bodyguard and prevention from a visit to Constantinople is suggestive of honourable protective custody.[1] Diplomatic exchanges had to be filtered through the distorting medium of translation. And yet, for all the antagonism and suspicion present, channels of transmission were available most of the time, the frontier was in no sense hermetic, and an official *modus vivendi* had been elaborated between the two great rivals.

As a result of the interpenetration of the Iranian and Byzantine worlds, evidence of their familiarity with each other's beliefs and institutions can be traced back to an early period. Even where the trustworthiness of a particular author has occasionally been impugned, the general tone of the contemporary accounts is primarily historical rather than mythological, whatever may be the fantasies of later writers. Immediately after the accession of Ardashīr I, his Roman opponents do not seem to have grasped the full significance of the Sasanian *coup d'état*, but this ignorance did not last. By the fourth century the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus was usually accurately acquainted with the names of Persian rulers, generals, and provincial governors, as well as with the administrative divisions of the Sasanian empire. In one case at least, his information must be based on direct experience or eyewitness accounts since his description of the decoration of Persian palaces with hunting scenes is fully borne out by archaeological evidence.[2] The historians of the period of Justinian were equally well informed concerning the realm of Khusrau I, despite occasional errors. In particular Agathias had apparently been able to make use of the material kept in the Persian royal archives through the good offices of the interpreter of the king of kings who transmitted the information to him. Eastern magi on imperial monuments wear correct Iranian dress.[3]

[1] Procopius, "Gothic War" IV. XV. 20; Theoph. Sim. IV. xiii. 2; Peeters, "Ex-voto", p. 16.

[2] Amm. Marc. XVI. ix. 3; XVIII. v. 3; XXIII. vi. 14; XXIV. ii. 4; vi. 3; vi. 12; Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 182–3.

[3] Procopius, *passim*; Agathias IV. XXX; but cf. II. XXVi; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 294; Volbach and Hirmer, pp. 152–3, 179.

Our knowledge of the hereditary offices of the Sasanian state rest ultimately as much on the testimony of the seventh century Byzantine historian Theophylakt Simokattes, who apparently likewise had a Persian informant, as on the fragmentary Persian data.[1] Practical details seem to have received as much attention as more exalted subjects. In the 4th century the Byzantine itinerary map known as the *Tabula Peutingeriana* recorded the main routes of the Sasanian empire together with the relays to be found on them and the distances indicated in Persian parasangs rather than Roman miles. Three centuries later, the Pers-Armenian scholar Anania Širakacʿi, who was familiar with the geographic and mathematical works of the Hellenistic Alexandrian schools through his studies in Constantinople, gave conversion tables for Byzantine and Sasanian weights and measures.[2]

Ecclesiastical information was understandably extensive. By 410, at the time of its official recognition, the Christian Church of Persia was accurately informed concerning Orthodox canon law and the early ecclesiastical councils held on imperial territory. Through the medium of the School of Nisibis, the extensive writings of the great theologian Theodore of Mopsuestia, first accepted as orthodox by the Council of Chalcedon, but subsequently condemned by the Justinianic Council of the "Three Chapters" and consequently considered the fountainhead of Nestorian theology, as well as other Greek dogmatic and scientific works, were steadily translated into Syriac and made available to the Sasanian world.[3] The lives of the Persian martyrs were familiar to their coreligionists in Byzantine lands who enshrined their deeds in biographies and hymns in which inaccuracies seem to be the result of conformity to hagiographic epic and miraculous conventions rather than to misinformation, since they show considerable acquaintance with the realities of Sasanian society.[4]

Our knowledge of the precise level of Persian information on Byzantium is unfortunately limited by the extreme scarcity of true Sasanian sources and by the romantic semi-legendary character of the later accounts embodied in the *Shāh-nāma* and the historical romances. Even so, the accuracy of the great trilingual victory inscription of Shāpūr I

[1] Theoph. Sim. III. xviii. 6ff.; cf., however, Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, pp. 209–10.
[2] Miller, pp. 738–44, 781–802, Manandian, pp. 110–14, 116ff.
[3] *Synodicon Or.*, pp. 262ff., 278; Labourt, p. 292–301, cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* III (Utrecht/Westminster, Md., 1963), pp. 401–2ff.; Vööbus, pp. 15, 21, 105, 124 and n. 6 etc.
[4] John of Ephesus, *Lives*. See Devos, "Martyres", pp. 213–25, and Follieri, "Santi", pp. 227–42, for the reliability of some of these compositions.

on the so-called Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, one of whose versions was still written in Greek, with its correct identification of the Roman emperors Gordian, Philip the Arab, and Valerian in a period of the mid-third century, when the information of Latin historians on Sasanian affairs was still very hazy, and the exact portrayal of Roman figures on Shāpūr I's victory reliefs, all suggest that the quality of Persian information probably ceded nothing to that of the Romans.[1] Shāpūr's inscription may still curtly refer on occasion to the defeated Roman emperor as "Caesar" without further identification, but a familiarity, reaching considerably beyond generalities, with the intricate formulae of imperial chancery protocol is evidenced in the obvious echo of official Byzantine titulature which heads Khusrau II's letter to the emperor Maurice.[2] The court of the king of kings even seems to have been acquainted with the coronation ritual of Constantinople, if we are to believe the contemporary account that this was the ceremonial used for the young pretender whom Khusrau II sponsored as the son of the murdered emperor Maurice.[3] As in the case of co-operative action, Persian inquiries into foreign techniques and beliefs received sanction from on high. Shāpūr I sought Byzantine artisans for his monuments and cities and ordered a search for Greek scientific works, which he had incorporated into the canonical scriptures.[4] Khusrau I studied the works of Greek philosophers and encouraged translations and digests, as did the Constantinopolitan court in the case of commentaries on the Christian scriptures produced by the Persian School of Nisibis.[5]

Byzantium and Iran did not stop at the mere accumulation of information on their respective societies. They saw themselves not as fortuitous neighbours but as the only two great powers in an otherwise uncivilized world, as the normal complements in a well ordered and equilibrated universe. In doing this, they perforce acknowledged each other as equal. This concept was formally expressed in Khusrau II's famous letter to the emperor Maurice: "Two eyes has divine regulation granted to the world from the beginning in order to illuminate it: the mighty empire of the Romans and the realm of the Persians governed by the wisest rulers. In these two great powers restless and warlike

[1] *SKZ* in Sprengling, pp. 15–16; Maricq, "Res gestae", pp. 45–6; Ghirshman, figs. 196–8.

[2] Theoph. Sim. IV. x. 11. See Goubert, p. 135 for the authenticity of this letter.

[3] Anon. Guidi, p. 19.

[4] *Dēnkart* IV. 413; Zaehner, pp. 8, 10–11, 139, etc.

[5] Agathias II. xxviii–xxxi; Zaehner, pp. 48–50; Mercati, *Paolo il Persiano*, *passim*; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 289; Vööbus, pp. 152–3.

nations are reduced to naught and the lives of men are ever ordered and ruled."[1] The same sentiments were to be repeated to the emperor in person by the Persian ambassadors: "It is impossible for a single empire to take upon itself the innumerable concerns for the order of the world and to succeed in ruling all the peoples upon whom the sun looks down with the single oar of its wisdom..."; they were still remembered in the late Iranian tradition reflected in the *Shāh-nāma*.[2]

This equality was scrupulously underlined by the diplomatic protocol whereby the two sovereigns ceremoniously addressed each other as "my brother".[3] When speaking of the Persian ruler, Byzantine historians respectfully used the full imperial title of *basileus*, which was gradually acquiring a supernatural aura at Constantinople in the 7th century, rather than any of the lesser formulae reserved for barbarian kings. Even in the distant west, Latin authors referred to the King of Kings as "*imperator Persarum*", and not by the more common title of *rex*.[4] In a moment of crisis, Khusrau II stretched courtesy so far as to style himself in his letter Maurice's "son and suppliant". If we credit the late testimony of the patriarch Michael the Syrian, writing in the twelfth century on the basis of earlier sources, Khusrau II even put the Persian court into official mourning upon receiving the news of Maurice's assassination, and subsequently arrogated to himself the role of the murdered emperor's avenger together with the protection of his purported son, the false Theodosius.[5]

The semi-legendary traditions which gradually clustered around the figures of the great imperial rivals likewise preserved a sense of their close ties based on ultimately similar superhuman backgrounds and mutual concern. The possibility of adoption from one imperial house to the other is repeatedly raised by the sources. The emperor Arcadius, fearing for the safety of his infant son, Theodosius II, is said to have entrusted him on his death in 408 to the guardianship of Yazdgard I, who accepted this responsibility and watched from afar over the welfare of the little emperor through the intermediary of trusted agents, until his own death in 421. On the contrary, we are told that the request of king Kavādh I that Justin I reciprocate one century later by adopting the king's favourite son, the future Khusrau I, was turned aside by the

[1] Theoph. Sim. IV. xi. 2.

[2] *Ibid.* IV. xiii. 7–8; Firdausī, tr. Mohl, VII, pp. 80, 84.

[3] Amm. Marc. XVII. v. 10; Menander, p. 209.

[4] Procopius, Theoph. Sim., *et al.*, *passim*. For the west: Fredegarius, IV. ix; Gregory I, "Epistulae" III. 66, 68.

[5] Theoph. Sim. IV. xi. 11; Michael the Syrian X. xxiv–xxv, pp. 374, 377; Goubert, p. 290 with the sources.

imperial authorities.[1] Two generations later, as we have already seen, Khusrau II referred to himself officially as Maurice's "son", a relationship apparently accepted by the Byzantine emperor.[2] Equally interesting is the story of Khusrau II's purported marriage to a daughter of Maurice named Maria, a tale which was to have a great vogue in Oriental literature based on Iranian traditions and which we find expanded into an extended romantic episode in the *Shāh-nāma*.[3]

The accuracy of these tales is not their most important aspect for us here. At best, the entrusting of Theodosius II to the care of Yazdgard I was a diplomatic courtesy which could not be juridically binding since the boy had already been crowned in his father's lifetime and consequently, as a reigning emperor, could have no legal tutor set over him.[4] Moreover, the arguments against the adoption of young Khusrau I, which Procopius puts into the mouth of Justin I's advisers, reject the possibility of a true adoption in the case of a foreigner. Still more improbable, and now generally discredited, is the fictitious tale of the marriage of Maria "Caesar's daughter" to the King of Kings, which Byzantine historians significantly ignore altogether despite its later popularity in the East. Khusrau II may well have had a Greek girl named Maria among the Christian women of his harem, since she is known to contemporary Syrian sources, but Byzantine protocol expressly opposed the marriage of imperial princesses outside the realm. We know of no such case up to the 7th century, and the elaborate later explanations that the princesses granted to foreigners were not truly legitimate indicate that this principle was generally obeyed.[5] The real significance of these dubious tales in the context of this investigation lies in their underlying assumption, evidently fully shared by both societies, that the rulers of Iran and Byzantium were of similar rank and nature and consequently might fittingly become related by adoption or marriage. In view of the supernatural aura which surrounded both these monarchs, the possibility of such unions gave tacit religious, as well as intellectual and political, sanction to the belief in their essential equality.

[1] Procopius, "Persian War" I. ii. 1–10; xi, 6–22. Cf. Agathias I. Prooimion, 23; IV. xxvi. 3–8.

[2] Theoph. Sim. IV. x. 11; V. iii. 11; Theophanes I, p. 266; Barhebraeus, p. 85; Firdausī VII, pp. 81, 84.

[3] Ṭabarī, p. 283; Barhebraeus, p. 85; Mich. Syr., x. xxiii, p. 372; Firdausī VII, pp. 92, 107–11, 135–6, 148–9, 225–9, 233–8, 247; Tha'ālibī, pp. 368, 370, 394, 712; Mirkhond, p. 398.

[4] Zakrzewski, p. 426.

[5] Anon. Guidi, p. 10; Luitprand, p. 244; Constantine Porph., pp. 71–5; Goubert, pp. 179–82; Peeters, "Ex-voto", p. 27 n. 3; cf., however, Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 283 n. 2; Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, pp. 107, 241; Zaehner, p. 51.

II

From the material which we have examined so far, it seems reasonably warranted to accept the existence of constant contacts as well as of reciprocal awareness and recognition between the Byzantine and Iranian worlds. The propitious climate for the interpenetration of the two great contemporary societies was seemingly present. Under these circumstances, we should reasonably expect to find considerable proof of clear cases of influence from one civilization to the other. And yet, uncontrovertible evidence of such influence unexpectedly remains rather disappointing to date. The tendency of more recent scholarship in many areas has been to query relationships postulated or accepted by earlier generations rather than to intensify them. This may be no more than a passing phase resulting from an acknowledgement of the still highly unsatisfactory level of our information, but the time does not yet seem to have come for a definitive demonstration of direct and fundamental influence from either side. Superficial borrowings can be attested on a number of occasions, still unconnected parallels have often been noted, and several tempting hypotheses presented, but these are scarcely sufficient to support a thesis of massive or significant impact.

At a purely technical level interchanges can often be observed, particularly in the military sphere where the almost continuous state of war constantly tested defences and forced the adoption of similar tactics for survival. It seems likely that the late Roman armies, traditionally based on the infantry legions, acquired for obvious reasons corps of heavily armoured cavalry, the *cataphracti* or *clibanarii*, who corresponded to similar formations in the Sasanian forces, though even here the probability of a gradual modification within the Roman system as the result of centuries of wars against the Parthians, rather than a direct borrowing in the 3rd century, has recently been suggested. It may also be advisable to remember that the armament of the two armies was not identical: the all-important bow, the characteristic weapon of Persia from antiquity, came into increasingly greater use in the imperial armies, but the Sasanian weapon was considerably lighter and consequently less penetrating than the one used by Byzantine archers, who may therefore have developed their particular technique in wars against other peoples.[1] In the opposite direction, poliorcetic devices, such as

[1] Procopius, "Persian War" I. xviii. 32–4; Gabba, pp. 65 n. 66, 68, 73; E. Darkò, "Influences touraniennes sur l'évolution de l'art militaire des Grecs, des Romains et des Byzantins", *Byzantion* x (1935), p. 467; XII (1937), p. 129.

rams, *balistae*, and movable towers, as well as various systems of fortifications, were apparently borrowed by the Persians from the Romans, so that the defence methods of the Sasanians were greatly superior to those of the Arsacids. Khusrau I built an elaborate system of fortifications running parallel to Justinian's reconstruction of the imperial *limes*, and the armies of the two rivals were probably quite evenly matched, thus causing the essential stability of the frontier until the 7th century, despite occasional successful raids deep into the interior.[1] When, however, we turn away from purely practical aspects of weaponry to less tangible effects, the evidence becomes even less conclusive. At the beginning of the present century, Inostrantsev argued persuasively that the theories of Sasanian tacticians, which we find preserved in later works, had been inspired by Byzantine strategical treatises, thus showing a definite literary as well as concrete filiation between the two. This theory has been widely accepted since.[2] Nevertheless, many of the postulated similarities between Iranian tactics and those recommended by such Greek works as the *Strategikon* attributed to the emperor Maurice, need not always derive from a deliberate literary imitation. The drawing up of battle lines with soldiers facing away from the sun, or the precaution of laying in ample supplies in times of siege can surely be attributed as much to common sense as to foreign influence.[3]

On a similar technical level, the sojourn of Roman prisoners and artisans in Iran and their occasional return home has supported the tracing of their influence in various forms of minor arts. There seems to be little reason to doubt that Romans worked on the famous "Caesar's" dam at Shushtar or on the monuments of Bīshāpūr, whose mosaics show unmistakable western affinities both in style and in the technique itself, which is characteristically classical and foreign to the Iranian tradition. Evidence of their work has likewise been observed on most of the other monuments of Shāpūr I's favourite residence. The materials and workmen sent by Justinian I to work on the palace of Khusrau I at Ctesiphon have also left marks of their passage.[4] Dionysiac motifs appeared in Iranian silver and the outstanding quality of Roman glassworks directly or indirectly stimulated Sasanian competition. The highly developed silk working techniques for which Syria was famous

[1] Christensen, p. 212; Frye, p. 220; Inostrantsev, p. 55; Nyberg, pp. 316–26.

[2] Inostrantsev, pp. 42–81; Christensen, p. 218; Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, pp. 232–3.

[3] On the *Strategikon* and its problems see Dain, pp. 344–6; and G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1958), I, p. 418.

[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 135, 137–66, 200, figs. 180–6; *idem*. *Bichâpour II*; Porada, pp. 195, 214, 220.

were apparently imported into Iran, turning the country from its position of middleman for the raw material into a potential rival for the imperial industries.[1] Reciprocally, Sasanian influence has long been acknowledged in a number of decorative motifs in Byzantine architecture, in Antiochene mosaics, and particularly in the splendid figured silks covered with real and fabulous animals which were to carry the fame of imperial workshops all the way to western Europe.[2]

At a higher, more purely artistic level however, the opinion of scholars becomes sharply divided. The powerful impact of Greek art on Sasanian Persia and vice versa: the Parthian origin of hieratic frontality in late Roman and Byzantine portraits, the indebtedness of Sasanian bas-reliefs to Roman models, even the controversial hypothesis of the presence of a Persian domed prototype lying in the background of much of Byzantine architecture, among others, have found ardent champions to this day. Without attempting to raise here the multiple thorny problems of Irano-Byzantine art, which will find a fuller treatment elsewhere in this work,[3] or of the tantalizing "Oriental" elements which abound in Western Romanesque architecture, which also lie beyond the scope of this chapter, it may be worth mentioning that a note of caution has been sounded by scholars working on either side of the frontier. Differences in building techniques and architectural principles, the absence of traceable links between eastern and western monuments of a similar type, the possibility of internal evolution on the basis of native traditions rather than foreign contact, the need to evaluate recent archaeological discoveries, while in no way invalidating the thesis of artistic interrelations, all suggest nevertheless the need for another serious re-examination of the evidence and consequently of the nature and degree of reciprocal influence.[4]

In intellectual matters, Persia proved far more curious and receptive than Byzantium, so that the visible current is unmistakably one-sided. The imagination of Iran was struck by the figures and events of the land of "Rūm", which play so large a part in the epic tradition of the *Shāh-nāma*, and in the romantic literature,[5] but the same cannot be said

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 238, 247; Ettinghausen, "A Persian Treasure".

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 290ff., 306, 315; Krautheimer, p. 225; Grabar, p. 56.

[3] See pp. 1127–29.

[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 145–6, 151, 158, 186, 247, but cf. pp. 283–315; Krautheimer, pp. 232–3; Bianchi Bandinelli, "Forma artistica"; Schlumberger, pp. 383–93; cf., however, Herzfeld, pp. 306–40.

[5] Firdausī, *passim*. Also in the Persian version of the Alexander romance and in learned and folk literature; cf. J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), pp. 154–66.

of Constantinople. Except its unavoidable inclusion into historical and geographical accounts or patriotic poems, for a concern with the lives of Persian martyrs, and for its possible role in the transmission of the didactic Buddhist tale of "Barlaam and Joasaph" by way of Christian Syria or the Caucasus, Persia remains strangely absent from Byzantine literature.[1] The same lopsided pattern is observable in more scholarly works. Greek scientific and philosophical treatises of the Hellenistic and Neo-Platonic schools, the works of Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Porphyry were translated in Iran under the auspices of Shāpūr I and Khusrau I, or at the Christian schools of Nisibis and Gundeshāpūr whence they were eventually transmitted to Islam and then passed back to the west.[2] Despite Agathias' sneers at Khusrau's classical scholarship and intellectual pretensions, Greek philosophy was unquestionably appreciated and to some degree assimilated by the Persians, who introduced it even into their sacred scriptures. Traces of Aristotelian concepts of cosmology and of his doctrines of matter, form, and the mean are evidently present in parts of the Zoroastrian tradition even where they are not always suited to their new surroundings. The inclusion of foreign scientific material is explicitly acknowledged by the *Dēnkart*.[3] The influence of Neo-Platonic thought has also been claimed for the religio-socialist Mazdakite movement which convulsed Iran in the days of Kavād I. These ideas would presumably have been brought in much earlier by a certain Bundos who had lived in Rome at the time of Diocletian before coming to Iran. In this case, the unbridged gap of two centuries between Bundos' journey and Mazdak's proselytizing, and the far clearer relationship between Mazdakism and Manichaean ideas current in Iran since the third century had led to the challenge of this thesis, though not of the presence of Neo-Platonic works among the Greek books found in the Sasanian realm.[4] But no equivalent interest in Zoroastrian thought can be observed in Byzantium whose intellectual tradition, be it artistic or scientific, remained rigidly Hellenic and Christian. At the same time, if we look more closely at the sources of

[1] St. John Damascene? *Barlaam and Joasaph*, tr. G. R. Woodward and H. Mattingly (London–New York, 1914) (LCL); *The Balavariani* (*Barlaam and Josaphat*), tr. D. Lang (London, 1966); S. Impellizeri, *La Letteratura bizantina da Constantino agli Iconoclasti* (Bari, 1965), pp. 168, 285–6.

[2] Nallino, *passim*; O'Leary, pp. 8, 18, 26, 34–5, 46–52, 61–3, 66–72, 78–9, 83–4, 92 etc.; Pagliaro, p. 15.

[3] Zaehner, pp. 8–11, 48–50, 139–43, 251–3, 267, etc.

[4] Malalas, *Chronographia* xi, pp. 309–10; Altheim and Stiehl, "Mazdak und Porphyrius"; *Ein asiatischer Staat*, pp. 370–2; Pigulevskaia, *Villes*, pp. 196–204; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 286. [Cf. ch. 27(*a*), pp. 995, 997, 1020 in this volume.]

Greek influence on Persian intellectual and spiritual life, it becomes immediately evident that this influence can properly be called Byzantine only in so far as it was presumably transmitted to Persia in the days of the Sasanians, if we accept the late testimony of the *Dēnkart*. In content, the Greek works studied in Iran from the 3rd to the 7th century were exclusively Hellenistic. In this sense they were cut off from the contemporary deeply Christian Byzantine civilization both on chronological and religious grounds. The reading of these works in the schools of Constantinople and Ctesiphon may indicate parallel development but not necessarily intellectual communications, since they remained to a considerable degree extraneous to both traditions and derived from a distant past.

When we shift to a consideration of the Christian communities through which the influence of orthodox Constantinople should properly have been exerted, the situation alters in form but not really in essence. We have already said that constant connections were maintained among the Christian groups living on either side of the frontier and that theological works were actively translated into Syriac. Such activities do not in themselves, however, automatically imply the extensive rapports with either capital which would have made of these communities a significant link between the two civilizations. The official church of Persia from its recognition in 410 to the end of the Sasanian dynasty was Nestorian in confession, though its doctrinal rivals, the Monophysites, had established themselves in Armenia and made serious inroads elsewhere by the 7th century. But in the eyes of Constantinople, the Nestorians in 431 and the Monophysites in 451 had been condemned as heretics by oecumenical councils. As such, they were both cut off from orthodox church circles, subject to legal sanctions and severe persecution, and in many cases, such as that of the School of the Persians, they preferred the jurisdiction of the King of Kings to that of the emperor. They might maintain their relations with their coreligionists in Armenia, Antioch, or Alexandria, but not with imperial Constantinople whose language was not theirs traditionally or liturgically, and where even the head of the Persian church on an official mission might find himself in serious difficulties if he did not compromise with his conscience and accept compulsory communion with the orthodox patriarch.[1]

On the other side of the frontier, the status of Christians remained

[1] Goubert, p. 137; Labourt, p. 243; Garsoïan, "Hiérarchie", pp. 190ff.

precarious despite their avowals of loyalty, effusive praise of the king, and periodic proclamations of toleration. Too much should not be made of the wishful thinking of distant authors who attributed Christian beliefs to some of the Persian rulers. Zoroastrianism was and remained the state religion of Iran under the Sasanians, and apostasy from Mazdaism was forbidden and severely punished. Some of the repressive measures directed against the Christians were undoubtedly precipitated by their intrigues with Byzantium or by internal dissentions, but the King of Kings did not and could not normally favour Christianity in any serious sense. As the guardian of the state religion, he would have undercut his authority and endangered his position by such a policy. Hormizd IV, wishing to repress the too-powerful Magians, may have answered them that his throne has need of its back as well as its front feet; Procopius could praise from afar the high-mindedness of Yazdgard I a century earlier; Maurice's emissary, bishop Domitian of Melitene, might flatter himself that he would convert young Khusrau II; the steady chronological synchronization between Christian persecution and the renewals of the Byzantine war make all too patent the purely political aspects of royal tolerance in Iran. Christians for the King of Kings were either useful or potentially disloyal subjects, their beliefs were of no real interest to him, and the conversion of Persians, as against Syrians and other minority groups, remained rare and severely repressed.[1]

With the dissociation of the Persian church from Constantinople following their doctrinal split, the period of mass persecutions which had marked the reigns of Shāpūr II and Yazdgard II in the 4th and 5th centuries came to an end. The status of Christians improved perceptibly. But even in the case of Maurice's "adopted son" Khusrau II, there is no reason for believing in a crypto-conversion, which belongs to a romantic Christian mythology and is explicitly rejected by the Iranian tradition in the *Shāh-nāma*.[2] Neither the patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, nor pope Gregory the Great took the intentions of the young king during his sojourn on Byzantine territory seriously. His famous gifts to Saint Sergius of Resapha, made at a time when Khusrau's reconquest of his throne depended on Maurice's favour, suggest little more than opportunism or a superstitious desire to

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 268; Procopius, "Persian War" I. ii. 8; Goubert, pp. 144–5; Peeters, "Ex-voto", pp. 29–41, 44 n. 1, *et al.*

[2] Firdausī VII, pp. 145–8; Goubert, pp. 172–5.

placate all powers, supernatural as well as worldly, which is amply illustrated by the king's simultaneous building of churches and fire temples.[1] After Maurice's death in 602 and the exploitation of his friendship to the murdered emperor to resume the Byzantine war, Khusrau returned to the normal pattern of alternate toleration and repression. The personal favour of the king was extended to certain individuals, Christians were found in high places and even in the royal household, but the romantic aura surrounding the figure of Khusrau's Christian favourite Shīrīn and the tales of her power in the state have occasionally overshadowed the martyrdom of important Christian officials and bishops in the same period. The most that imperial negotiations could obtain at the height of Byzantine–Sasanian co-operation in 591 was an edict of toleration on the basis of the *status quo* forbidding all proselytizing. Neither the enforced vacancy of the patriarchal throne of Seleucia–Ctesiphon between 609 and 628, nor the sack of Jerusalem in 614 with its removal to Persia of the relic of the True Cross, nor the fear expressed by the Syrian clergy that Khusrau II intended to extirpate their church, nor finally their relief at his death, argue for the favourable dispositions of the King of Kings.[2]

In no real sense, therefore, can we postulate a gradual christianization of the Sasanian empire which might be taken as an indication of the influence of its Greek neighbour. On the contrary, the Syrian and Armenian Christians never appreciably infiltrated into the Iranian core of the empire, and, simultaneously, they fared best within it when their beliefs had made them *personae non gratae* at Constantinople. Consequently, throughout the Sasanian period Armeno-Syrian Christianity maintained a sort of extraterritoriality in both realms. Their communities clung together and shared information, but these interchanges did not extend far outside their boundaries or have serious effect on the ruling establishments. Those communities may perhaps be taken as a remnant of the hybrid third world which had disappeared politically with the clarification of the Irano-Byzantine frontier and the elimination of the local dynasties, but as such they lay outside the mainstream of both civilizations. The same may incidentally be said of the Manichaeans who, despite their syncretism of Christian and Iranian beliefs, were equally abhorrent to Byzantium, whose militant orthodoxy was

[1] John of Nikiu, xcvi; Gregory I, "Epistulae" III. 68; Nöldeke *Ṭabarī*, p. 353; Goubert, p. 172ff.; Peeters, "Ex-voto", *passim*.

[2] Theoph. Sim., VI. xii. 6; John of Nikiu, xcvi; Anon. Guidi, p. 28; Labourt, pp. 224–34.

outraged by the dualism of those whom it viewed as heretics, and to the Persians, who rejected the Manichaean opposition of spirit and matter as incompatible with their own purely spiritual dualism.[1]

III

Some of the most elaborate theses of interaction between Byzantium and Iran have been concerned with the governmental institutions of both empires: the indebtedness of Iranian legal thinking and of the great tax reform of Khusrau I in the 6th century to late Roman and Byzantine models, and reciprocally, the imitation of Sasanian court ceremonial by Diocletian and his successors, or the effect of the military and administrative re-structuring which accompanied Khusrau I's fiscal policy on the developing pattern of Byzantine provincial administration in which military and civilian powers were reunited in the units known as *themes*. But even in this area, where considerable work has already been done, the evidence remains inconclusive or tends toward a decrease rather than a stress on the importance of foreign factors.

The similarities recently postulated between the summary codifications in books eight and nine of the *Dēnkart* or the collection of juridical decisions composing the *Mātigān ī hazār dātastān* ("The Book of a Thousand Judgements") and Roman legislation rest on unsatisfactory Persian texts presenting such exceptional problems of translation and interpretation, and such serious divergences in form and spirit from the Roman legal tradition, that they cannot at present provide sufficient bases for conclusions.[2] The thesis presented by Pigulevskaia and Altheim that the fiscal-poll and land tax-reform of Khusrau I described by Ṭabarī was based on the system introduced into the Roman empire by Diocletian rests on insufficient evidence.[3] As has been observed by Pigulevskaia herself, the particular parallel to the Iranian tax system cannot be found in any Roman imperial legislation, with the sole

[1] Kartir, *KKZ* in Sprengling, *Iran*, p. 51, l. 10; F. C. Burkitt, *CAH* XII, 504–14; Widengren, *Religions*, pp. 331–41; *idem*, *Mani and Manichaeism* (London, 1965), *passim*; Duchesne-Guillemin, pp. 272, 280–2, *et al.* For the use of Manichaeans as political agents by the Persians, however, as was done on occasion with Christian hierarchs, see W. Seston, *Dioclétien*, pp. 151–6, etc.; *idem*, "Authenticité", p. 352; Volterra, "La costituzione di Diocleziano . . . contro i Manichei".

[2] A. G. Perikhanian (ed.), *Sasanidskiĭ Sudebnik* (Erevan, 1974); and this vol. p. 680. Pigulevskaia, *Villes*, pp. 102–3; Pagliaro, pp. 15–16, cf. 25–6.

[3] Pigulevskaia, "Reform"; *idem*, *Villes*, pp. 109, 229; *idem*, *Vizantiia*, pp. 119–20; Altheim and Stiehl, *Ein asiatischer Staat*, pp. 129–255; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 240–7.

exception of a single title in the so-called "Roman-Syrian Law-code", whose origin and date are open to considerable controversy, and of which no Pahlavi translation is known to have existed. The cited fiscal terminology, presumably showing a Greek derivation, in the Babylonian *Talmud* is not entirely conclusive, while the pattern of the tax payments in three instalments found in Byzantium as well as Iran is too common to be probative.[1] Still more seriously, economic historians of the late Roman empire have expressed increasing doubts as to our knowledge of the Diocletianic tax system, and voiced the opinion that the pattern of taxation was not uniformly applied throughout his empire but varied from province to province.[2] Furthermore, the particular system characteristic of Syria in the Diocletianic pattern is the very one found both in the "Roman-Syrian Law-code" and in the new Sasanian institution.[3] Hence, there seem to be reasonable grounds for thinking that Khusrau's tax structure was simply a continuation of local Syrian traditions, not only adopted by the Sasanians, but surviving and flourishing under Islam, rather than the importation and copy of a general late Roman model which we cannot as yet identify with precision.

In the case of the court ceremonial, the extensive demonstration given by Alföldi has shown that the innovations attributed to Diocletian have a long train of precedents in the Roman imperial tradition. Consequently, while early 4th century imperial protocol unquestionably contained numerous oriental elements, as had been the case in the Hellenistic monarchies, these cannot be reduced to a simple borrowing of Sasanian ritual in this period.[4]

Finally, the parallel drawn by Stein between the system of military administration attributed to Khusrau I, whereby the supreme high command of the Iranian army was divided between four commanders, or *spāhbads*, and soldiers were granted land along the borders in return for military service, while at the same time the authority of the prime minister, the *vuzurg framadār*, gradually declined; and the Byzantine theme system of the 7th century in which the formerly divided civilian

[1] P. J. Bruns and E. Sachau, *Syrisch-römisches Rechtsbuch aus dem V Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1880), cxxi, p. 33; E. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* (Berlin, 1907), p. 136; Pigulevskaia, "Reform", pp. 148–9; *idem*, "Siriĭskiĭ Zakonnik"; *idem*, *Vizantiia*, pp. 221–4.

[2] See Palanque in Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* I, pp. 441–3 n. 44 for the historiography of this question.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 442; Déléage, p. 254ff; Jones, pp. 62–3; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 241–7.

[4] Alföldi, "Ausgestaltung"; *idem*, "Insignien"; W. Ensslin, "The End of the Principate", *CAH* XII (1939), p. 357; cf., however, H. Mattingly, "The Imperial Recovery", *ibid.*, p. 337 and Palanque in Stein, *Histoire du Bas-empire* I, p. 437 n. 20.

and military administration of the province was replaced by military districts, whose commanders simultaneously holding civilian powers replaced the paramount authority of the praetorian prefect, and whose armies were composed of local recruits granted small landholdings against service in the army; has been decisively rejected by the majority of Byzantine scholars.[1] Without attempting to raise here the *vexata quaestio* of the origin of the imperial theme system, which has provoked so much controversy in recent years, it will be possible to note that the painstaking demonstrations already given that the thematic pattern was not a sudden innovation by the emperor Heraclius or his successors, before or after the great Persian campaign of 622–9, but a long drawn out evolution reaching back to late Roman times, militates against the possibility of deliberate imitation.[2] Nor is the parallel between the two administrative systems as close as would appear at first glance. The equation between the loss of prestige of the Sasanian vuzurg framadār and the gradual elimination of the Roman praetorian prefect can be made only if we abstract the fact that Iran boasted a single prime minister while Diocletian had established four prefects for the empire. Similarly, the presence in Byzantium of initially four (or perhaps three) themes before the system was spread to the entire imperial territory is not identical with Khusrau I's division of his whole realm into four quarters each under the command of a spāhbad. Lastly, Lemerle and Karayannopoulos' reminder that we have as yet no evidence whatsoever for the existence of soldier-farmers in Byzantium before the 10th century challenges the all important association between the administrative pattern of the themes emerging in the 7th century and local recruiting.[3] Thus, none of the explanations recently presented for the development of themes on Byzantine territory can any longer be brought into agreement with Stein's postulated Iranian model. In none of the administrative institutions of the two states can we, therefore, observe at present a clear cut case of imitation or borrowing. Nor can the recent Marxist interpretation of a similar stage of feudal development simultaneously reached by the two societies and providing a basis for their equation be reconciled with the centralized bureaucratic

[1] Stein, "Ein Kapitel"; Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, p. 217; Christensen, pp. 518–26; cf. on the opposite side Karayannopoulos, "Thèmes byzantins", p. 476–7; Ostrogorsky, pp. 96–8 and p. 96, n. 1, p. 97, nn. 1–2; Pertusi, "Thèmes byzantins", p. 27, *et al.*

[2] Karayannopoulos, "Thèmes byzantins", pp. 477, 484, 492, 501, etc.; Pertusi, "Nuova potesi", p. 150, *et al.*

[3] Lemerle, "Esquisse", pp. 70–4; Karayannopoulos, "Thèmes byzantins", pp. 492–500.

structure characteristic of the Byzantine empire until long after the 7th century.[1]

In retrospect, the challenge of so many supposed points of coincidence has left us a degree of traceable influence between the two world powers of the early Middle Ages which is far less extensive than could be expected from the clear evidence of their mutual contact and recognition. Technical borrowing was undoubtedly carried on among craftsmen and military tacticians. Reciprocal artistic reactions seem manifest even where their precise course needs further clarification, though the fundamental traditions often remained divergent beneath the surface. Intellectual relations, particularly in the more strictly scientific and scholarly areas, undoubtedly took place, but they were altogether one-sided and curiously anachronistic in content. The evidence for parallel administrative institutions is inconclusive at best. Relatively little Christian penetration into the truly Iranian world, as distinct from the Syro-Armenian border society, can be shown. All in all, the degree of reciprocity is low and its quality often superficial.

We can only speculate on the reasons for this rather disappointing showing. Many of the more obvious parallels in beliefs and institutions between the two states: the theory of the absolute centralized monarchy with supernatural overtones, the concept of religion in terms of an official state church, the increasing militarization of the state, are all explicable in terms of co-existence in a single world, sharing the ideas, problems and general climate of the times; and in many ways both states were heirs to a common Hellenistic past in which classical and eastern elements had already been blended. The similarity in response to identical stimuli need not imply an essential similarity. Under the superficial likeness lay fundamental differences which never altered and cannot be disregarded: irreconcilable religious antagonism in a profoundly religious world; the opposition between the Iranian traditional allegiance to a concept of hereditary legitimacy based on a clan structure of society and the continuing Byzantine adherence, *de jure* if not always *de facto*, to the Roman constitutional principle that the imperial office was an elective magistracy as well as a divinely ordained function; the ultimate reliance of the Iranian state, despite the centralizing reforms of the Sasanians, on a hereditary aristocracy and priesthood distributed among rigidly defined castes, as against the relative mobility of Byzantine society culminating throughout this period in an aristocracy of office rather than birth.

[1] Pigulevskaia, *Vizantiia*, pp. 250–1.

The acceptance by both sides of the general premise that Byzantium and Iran were destined to share the rule of the world made of them rivals as much as partners. Behind the bland courtesy of diplomatic clichés ran a deep vein of enmity, and, what was perhaps still more damaging, mutual contempt. To the Zoroastrians Byzantium remained the heir of Alexander the Great, "the emperor of Rūm" of the Iranian tradition, the sacrilegious burner of the sacred text of the Avesta preserved at Stakhr. Perpetuating the Sasanian tradition, Ṭabarī makes of Ardashīr I the avenger of Darius III.[1] For all of his fostering of western ways, Shāpūr I gloatingly spread the record of his humiliation of the Romans on every one of his monuments. Firdausī's version of Khusrau II's final victory over Bahrām Chūbīn shows the king rejecting the aid of the boastful Romans to rely exclusively on the valour of his Iranian nobles.[2] No less on the Greek side, the comments of Procopius on Persian native arrogance, the belittling of Khusrau I's learning by Agathias, Theophylakt Simokattes' characterization of Khusrau II as a "barbarian" and his accusation of perfidy against the Persian king at the siege of Martyropolis, echoed by John of Nikiu's allegation that the King of Kings had treacherously plotted to poison his Roman allies, all bode equally ill for the reaching of a common understanding.[3] Both world cultures, proud of their great historical past, firmly wrapped in the assurance of their own superiority, could not willingly accept the lessons of the enemy, nor would such lessons suit their characteristic societies. Persia evinced a certain interest in the ancient learning of Greece, which she helped preserve and transmit to the Islamic world, but a contemptuous disregard for foreign achievements remained to the end the hall-mark and the Achilles' heel of Byzantium.

Chronologically, the parallel political courses of the two empires led to divergence rather than coalescence. For all of the open belligerence of his policy, a taste for Hellenic ideas and styles had still marked court circles in the days of Shāpūr I, with his use of the Greek language in his great inscription, his incorporation of Greek learning into the scriptures, his patronage of Manichaean syncretism, and his use of Greek artists for his residence at Bīshāpūr and elsewhere. But this taste fades rapidly into nothingness, despite a possible fleeting revival due to Khusrau I's interest in classical philosophy and Justinian's loan of

1 Abel, "La figure d'Alexandre"; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 3.

2 Firdausī vi, pp. 119–39, especially pp. 125, 129; Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 152–61.

3 Procopius, "Persian War" I. xi. 4, 9; Agathias II. xxviii; Theoph. Sim. v. iii. 4–7; xiii. 1; John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, xcvi.

imperial workmen for the royal palace of Ṭāq-i Kisrā at Ctesiphon. Particularly remarkable is the seeming absence of any such revival in the early days of Khusrau II, in the period of closest political co-operation between Iran and Byzantium. No putative rapprochement due to a sharing of a feudal social pattern or to monotheistic tendencies in Zoroastrianism can be demonstrated in the late Sasanian period. If the suggested increase in toleration of the Iranian state toward Christianity after the 5th century perhaps lessened the gap between the two religious antagonists, the growing religious orientation of the Byzantine court, which from the late 6th century turned political wars into crusades and retaliated for the sack of Jerusalem by the destruction of the royal fire temple at Ganzak in Āzarbāījān, served to push them once more asunder.[1] A useful index of the depth of irreconcilability between the two adjacent worlds may perhaps be provided by the incapacity of Armenia, torn between its imperial religious and intellectual tradition and its Iranian social structure, to come to rest in either sphere or to achieve political stability between them. The Athenian philosophers fleeing the empire of Justinian received both asylum and welcome at the court of Ctesiphon, but a few years later, unable to adapt themselves or accept an alien world, they were themselves to beg the King of Kings to allow them to return home.[2]

[1] Theoph. Sim. II. iii. 4, 9; Sebēos, *Héraclius*, xxvi; Theophanes, *Chronographia* I, pp. 307–8; *et al.*

[2] *Agathias* II. xxxi.

CHAPTER 16

IRAN AND THE ARABS BEFORE ISLAM

I

The links of the Arabs with the Persians go back well into Achaemenian times. According to Herodotus, iii. 5, Cambyses marched on Egypt via northern Arabia and the Ḥijāz after making a pact with and receiving a safe conduct from the king of the Arabs, probably to be identified with the ruler of Liḥyān, predecessor of the Nabataeans in the region; and according to vii. 86–7, the Arabs furnished camel-mounted cavalrymen, who fought with bows, to Xerxes. The Arabs of north-western Arabia and the western fringes of the Syrian Desert passed under the suzerainty of Alexander the Great, according to Polybius and Pliny, and then under that of the Seleucids; thus the tradition was established, to endure down to the Muslim conquest of Syria in the 7th century A.D., of the Arabs acting as frontier auxiliaries for the Romans and then the Byzantines.

On the eastern fringes of the Syrian Desert, Arabs from the interior of the peninsula pressed into the fertile lands of Mesopotamia from an early date. The Assyrians had had a conscious policy of controlling the Arab tribes of northern Arabia, thereby curbing raids on caravan traffic across the peninsula, and they had made their authority felt as far west as Taimā', occupied by Nabuna'id from 552 to 545 B.C. After the Persian capture of Babylon in 539 B.C., Cyrus the Great created a short-lived satrapy of 'Arabāyā in northern Arabia, and Darius, seeking to encourage trade through the Persian Gulf, sent out the Greek Scylax of Caryanda on a voyage of exploration right round the coasts of the Arabian peninsula. In the Seleucid period, Mesopotamia served as a base for the Seleucid kings' attempts to extend their political and commercial power into the Persian Gulf region and along the eastern coastlands of Arabia. From his base of Seleucia on the Tigris, Antiochus III the Great (223–187) in 205–204 B.C. sailed along the southern shore of the gulf as far as Chattenia and the district of the port of Gerrha, which was probably situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of

modern Dhahran and Qaṭīf, roughly opposite Baḥrain Island, and which was an entrepôt for the Indian trade and for the aromatics and spices of South Arabia; a later king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164) is said to have undertaken a similar expedition.[1]

Lower Iraq has throughout history been a point of entry for the Bedouins into the *ḥaḍar* or settled lands of Mesopotamia. As the Seleucid empire decayed, an Arab principality was established there in the later 2nd century B.C. (after 129 B.C.), based on a settlement on the banks of the lower Tigris, Charax of Hyspaosines or simply Charax (< Aramaic *karkhā* "fortified settlement, town"). Its founder Hyspaosines son of Sagodonacus bears a wholly Iranian name (interpreted by Justi as "free of dust or stain", i.e. noble-minded, and by Bartholomae as "he who kicks up the dust",[2] yet more probably, as suggested by Sir Harold Bailey, **hu-spǎsẖina-* "keeping good watch", cf. Greek *euskopos*), but he is described as king of the Arabs in that region, sc. of northeastern Arabia; the cultural language in Charax must, however, have been Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Fertile Crescent. Charax now became the focal point of the Arab principality of Characene or Mesene (post-biblical Hebrew Mēshān, Syriac Maishān, MP Mēshūn, passing into Arabic of the Islamic period as Maisān, occasionally Maishān), which embraced what was, in early Islamic times, the region between Baṣra and Wāsiṭ. Mesene flourished from its position commanding the trade routes to the head of the Persian Gulf, and enjoyed independence for three centuries, until in *c.* 224 A.D. the Sasanian Ardashīr I (*c.* 226–41) killed the last ruler of Charax. Ardashīr then made Mesene into a dependent province of his empire, appointing over it a local ruler who bore the title of Mēshūn-Shāh.[3] In Sasanian times, there was a separate Nestorian Christian metropolitan district of Mesene, comprising four bishoprics.[4]

The Parthians and then the Sasanians made Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris in central Mesopotamia, their capital and the centre from which Iranian power radiated over Aramaic, and then increasingly Arab, Iraq. Arab infiltration into this part of Iraq centred on Hatra,

[1] E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* II (London, 1902), 23–4, 160. For Gerrha, see J. Tkač, in Pauly VII/I, s.v. The site remains unidentified; see G. Bibby, *Looking for Dilmun* (New York, 1969), pp. 317–18, 331–2 and *passim*.

[2] F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), p. 336; H. H. Schaeder, in Pauly XV/I, s.v. "Mesene".

[3] Weissbach, in Pauly, *art. cit.*; J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 40–2; F. Altheim and R. Stiehl *Die Araber* I, 317ff.; Arabic sources in Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 13.

[4] M. Streck, in *Encycl. of Islam*[1], "Maisān".



Map 13. The sphere of contact in the Near East between Iran and the Arabs in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times.

Arabic al-Ḥaḍr, a settlement founded in northern Iraq, to the south-west of Mosul, by the middle of the 1st century B.C.; Arabic names in the Aramaic inscriptions from this region show clearly the ethnic origins of most of the early rulers. Hatra appears as only one of a ring of Arab principalities founded around this time along the desert fringes of the Fertile Crescent, stretching through northern Mesopotamia and Commagene to Edessa (where reigned the house of Abgar from the 1st century B.C. onwards), Hamat, Emesa and Palmyra. The more westerly

ones endured until the extension of direct Roman rule into these parts; the more easterly ones came within the Parthian cultural and political sphere of influence; certain of the early rulers even of Edessa bore Iranian names.[1] Hatra's first rulers were simply called "lords" (*māryā*), but in the 1st century A.D. one lord with a Parthian name, *vlg'š* (Vologases), styled himself *Malkā dhī 'Arabh* "king of the Arabs". At least three other rulers bore the typical Arsacid name Sanatrūk, and Sanatrūk II, apparently after successfully warding off a Roman attack led by Trajan in 117 A.D., added to his titles the epithet of *zakkāyā* "the conquering".[2]

As the ally of the Arsacids, Hatra fought off Roman attacks led by Septimius Severus, even after Trajan and he had captured the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon. It flourished both as a caravan city and as the possessor of a religious shrine dedicated to the cult of the Sun God. Hatra's fortunes declined with those of its patrons the Arsacids; after the defeat of Artabanus V in 224 A.D. by Ardashīr I, Hatra was garrisoned for a while against the Sasanians by the Romans, until Shāpūr I (241–72, the Sābūr al-Junūd of the Arabic sources) succeeded in occupying the city and plundering it, ensuring that it never rose again to any position of significance. The Arabic historians weave a romantic legend around these events, that the city was finally betrayed to Shāpūr by al-Naḍīra, daughter of its king al-Ḍaizān b. Mu'āwiya (who bore the title al-Sāṭirūn < Sanatrūk?), who had fallen in love with the Sasanian besieger.[3]

In place of Hatra – which became famous in Arabic lore as an object-lesson in the transience of earthly prosperity – there arose in central Iraq the city of Ḥīra, apparently a creation of the Tanūkh tribe of Arabs, who formed an important population element there. Very soon it became the capital of the Arab Lakhmid dynasty, allies of the Sasanians and guardians of the desert fringes against nomadic pressure from the interior of Arabia and against the Byzantines and their Ghassānid allies of Syria. The fortunes of the Lakhmids and Sasanians were so intertwined that within just over thirty years of the ending of Lakhmid independence in 602, Sasanian dominion over Iraq crumbled totally under Arabs from Najd, impelled by the new faith of Islam.

[1] J. B. Segal, *Edessa, 'the Blessed City'* (Oxford, 1970), p. 16.

[2] Altheim and Stiehl IV, 249–50, 260–3.

[3] A. Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 213–14; Altheim and Stiehl II, 191ff, IV, 263ff; C. Pellat, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "al-Ḥaḍr". [On this story, cf. pp. 380, 401 in this volume.]

II

Ḥīra (Syriac *ḥērthā* "fortified encampment", cf. Arabic *ḥair* "enclosure", found as a component in the names of two celebrated Umayyad palace complexes in Syria, Qaṣr al-Ḥair al-Sharqī and al-Gharbī) lay near the edge of the desert and the sown, a *farsakh* from the later Islamic armed camp of Kūfa and to the south-east of Karbalā'. As well as lying in a fertile agricultural area, it was famed for the salubriousness of its climate; an Arabic proverb stated that "A day and night at Ḥīra are better than a whole year's medicine." According to the antiquarian Hishām b. Muḥammad, called Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 819 or 821), to whom we owe important information on the chronology of the Lakhmid kings,[1] Ḥīra was founded during the reign of Ardashīr I after that monarch's conquest of Iraq from the Parthians. This is, however, improbable, and it was under Arab dominance, above all under the Lakhmid chiefs, that Ḥīra rose to fame, benefiting by its position as a commercial centre on the east–west caravan route between Syria in the west and Iraq and Persia in the east, and achieving a lasting cultural significance in Near Eastern history as the meeting-place of three cultures, those of Sasanian Iran, of Byzantine and Nestorian Christianity, and of indigenous Arabian paganism. The Lakhmids are usually known in the Arabic sources as the *Manādhira* and *Na'āmina*, al-Mundhir and al-Nu'mān being the two most characteristic titles borne by the dynasty's members; they are one of the three lines of pre-Islamic Arab rulers (together with the Ghassānids and the chiefs of Kinda) who are dignified by the title of *mulūk* "kings".[2]

The first known ruler of Ḥīra in its pre-Lakhmid phase was Jadhīma al-Abrash ("the Leper"), the subject of many anecdotes in Arabic literature.[3] He is described in a Nabataean inscription from the Ḥaurān in Syria as "king of the Tanūkh", a tribe who, as we have noted, lived in central Iraq but who had also, according to certain Arabic sources, in part migrated westwards to Syria away from the authority of Ardashīr; Jadhīma's power clearly stretched over the bedouins of the whole Syrian Desert. Among the first of the Lakhmids proper was

[1] An attempt at the evaluation of this information was made by G. Rothstein in his pioneering monograph on the dynasty, *Die Dynastie der Laḫmiden in al-Ḥīra*, pp. 50ff; unfortunately, much remains still obscure here. A useful table of the Lakhmid rulers and their regnal dates, with the reigns of the Sasanians given for comparison, is given in S. Smith, "Events in Arabia", p. 430.

[2] For a brief general account of Ḥīra, see Irfan Shahid, in *Encycl. of Islam*², s.v.

[3] See I. Kawar, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "Djadhīma al-Abrash".

Mar' al-Qais or Imru' al-Qais al-Bad', who enjoyed a long reign in the last quarter of the 3rd century and the first one of the 4th century, dying in 328 according to the proto-Arabic al-Namāra inscription from southern Syria, which gives him the extravagant title of "king of all the Arabs". He was the contemporary of several of the Sasanians, from Bahrām I to Shāpūr II, and acted as governor for them over the north Arab tribes of Rabī'a and Muḍar, with authority extending as far as the Ḥijāz; in his later years, however, he seems to have transferred his allegiance to the east Romans. The dynasty reached especial heights of splendour under al-Nu'mān I al-A'war ("the One-eyed") (405–33), the contemporary of the emperor Bahrām Gōr (420–38); it was he who reputedly built for his Sasanian suzerain the palace of Khawarnaq (MP "affording good protection, having a fine roof"?)[1] near Ḥīra, and the palace of Sadīr, both of them accounted by the pre-Islamic Arabs as amongst the wonders of the world.[2] Bahrām Gōr had grown up at the court of al-Mundhir I in the healthy atmosphere of Ḥīra, and he gained his throne in Ctesiphon with the help of the Lakhmid ruler against the Persian nobles who had killed his brother Shāpūr.[3]

The population of Ḥīra comprised its townspeople, the *'Ibād* "devotees", who were Nestorian Christians using Syriac as their liturgical and cultural language, though Arabic was probably the language of daily intercourse. These 'Ibād were famed for their literacy, and the traditions which speak of Meccan traders visiting Ḥīra and taking back with them the newly evolved Arabic alphabet are probably correct, in that a knowledge of writing amongst the northern Arabs does seem to have spread from the north-east of the peninsula. One of the few Arabic poets of the pre-Islamic era who seem to have been unambiguously Christian, as opposed to several poets who knew about and mentioned the external manifestations of Christianity, was 'Adī b. Zaid al-'Ibādī, who, as his name implies, stemmed from the 'Ibād.[4] The Lakhmid kings themselves remained strongly pagan till a very late

[1] Thus according to Rothstein, pp. 144–5, but there are linguistic difficulties in this etymology.

[2] See for a description of the ruins of Khawarnaq, A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates: A Topographical Itinerary* (New York, 1927), pp. 103–6, and in general, L. Massignon, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "Kkawarnaḳ"; it has been speculated that Sadīr may be identical with Ukhaiḍir, but the latter structure is more probably post-Islamic; see below, p. 612.

[3] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 86ff; Christensen, pp. 269–71. The Arabic sources are uncertain as to whether al-Nu'mān I was the son of al-Mundhir I or vice versa; see Rothstein, pp. 65ff; Smith in his table of rulers (p. 430) makes him the son of Imru' al-Qais I.

[4] Cf. J. Horovitz, "'Adi ibn Zayd, the Poet of Hira", *Islamic Culture* IV (1930), 31–69, and F. Gabrieli, "'Adī ibn Zaid, il poeta di al-Ḥīra", *Rendiconti dell' Accad. dei Lincei*, ser. 8, III (1948), 81–96.

date – it was the last ruler, al-Nuʿmān III b. al-Mundhir IV (580–602) who became the first and last Christian Lakhmid ruler – and their position as rulers over the Arabs depended not only on their links with Persia as Sasanian vassals, but also on those with the bedouins of the Iraq fringes, and especially with the Tanūkh, who were originally nomads but who gradually became partly sedentarized and must have permeated the ʿIbād as an element of the town population.[1]

Beyond this middle Euphrates–Tigris region, the coercive authority of the Lakhmids rested to a considerable extent on the amount of political and military support which they derived from the Sasanians in nearby Ctesiphon. The emperors granted to the Lakhmids estates as fiefs in the Sawād of Iraq, with the right to collect taxation and use it to defray their expenses as frontier wardens; however, the Arabic author Abu'l-Baqā' points out that these fiefs were not extensive and that those granted to al-Nuʿmān I amounted in value to a hundred thousand dirhams only, a comparatively modest sum for such a fertile region.[2]

Since the Lakhmids of Ḥīra were a family, and not a tribal group (the tribe of Lakhm, which the genealogists usually attributed to Yemen or the south Arabs, had dispersed itself across the Syrian Desert, much of it establishing itself in Syria, and after the coming of Islam, it virtually disappeared as an independent group),[3] they had to rely on foreign troops or mercenaries for their striking force. Various groups among the fighting men at the Lakhmids' disposal are mentioned in the Arabic sources, and their origins and nature have been discussed at length, firstly by Rothstein and more recently by Kister. These groups included the *Rahā'in* or "hostages", drawn from other Arab tribes, and the *Ṣanā'iʿ* "creatures" or "troops taken into personal service", made up of outlaws and outcasts of various tribes; but of particular interest in considering the Lakhmids' position *vis-à-vis* the Sasanians are the *Waḍā'iʿ* "troops left behind as a garrison, etc". Abu'l-Baqā' again says that these were a Persian unit sent by the emperors to the Lakhmids as reinforcements; they numbered one thousand cavalrymen and had a year's tour of duty in Ḥīra before returning to Persia and being replaced by a fresh contingent. These soldiers – who must have been professionals, of the familiar mailed and heavily armed cavalryman type

[1] See, on the ʿIbād and the various elements of Ḥīra's population, (sc. the *ʿIbād*, the nomadic Tanūkh and the so-called *Aḥlāf* or "confederates"), Rothstein, pp. 18ff and cf. H. Kindermann, in *Encycl. of Islam*[1], suppl., "Tanūkh".

[2] Cited in Kister, "al-Ḥīra", pp. 151–3.

[3] See H. Lammens, in *Encycl. of Islam*[1], art. "Lakhm".

– were, so the Arabic author says, the real mainstay of Lakhmid power, both against the Ḥīra townspeople and against the bedouins of the hinterland. Other Arabic sources, such as Ṭabarī, mention two other groups, forming an élite force called the Dausar and the Shahbā', as being Persian troops sent to Ḥīra in the time of al-Nu'mān I.[1]

Through the agency of the Lakhmids, the Sasanians not only aimed at protecting the desert fringes and thereby ensuring the safe passage of caravans through eastern Arabia to the Ḥijāz and Yemen, but also at extending their political influence westwards across the peninsula. Thus Ṭabarī mentions that Khusrau I Anūshirvān appointed al-Mundhir III b. Mā' al-Samā' (b. al-Nu'mān III?) (*c.* 505–54) over the regions of Baḥrain, 'Umān and Yamāma as far west as Ṭā'if, and over the rest of the Ḥijāz, in or shortly after 531.[2] It seems, indeed, that as part of the struggle with Byzantium, Persia had well before the 6th century attempted to exert some influence even in Mecca and Yathrib (the later Medina) via the recognized Ḥīra–Mecca commercial and cultural highway, thereby countering the influence of the Ghassānids in the Ḥijāz. The Arabic sources here are only fragmentary and allusive, but may well contain a kernel of truth. Certain of them state that when the Sasanian emperor Kavād (488–531) adopted the doctrines of Mazdak, he commanded his vassal al-Mundhir III to do likewise. When the latter refused, the emperor approached al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr, chief of the tribe of Kinda, who agreed to impose the new faith on the Arabs of Najd and the Ḥijāz. Hence some Arabs in Mecca, says the 13th century author Ibn Sa'īd, followed the tenets of Mazdak (*tazandaqa*), and at the time of Muḥammad's rise two generations or so later, there was still a group in Mecca recognized as erstwhile Mazdakites (*zanādiqa*).[3]

There is rather more information concerning Persian influence in Yathrib. Many traditions on pre-Islamic Medina lead us to conclude that the Jewish tribes settled there, still a significant element at the time of the *hijra*, formerly exercised dominion in the oasis over the Arab groups of the Banū Qaila, sc. the Aus and Khazraj, who had migrated thither from South Arabia. Now the 9th-century Muslim geographer Ibn Khurdādhbih records a tradition that the warden of the desert borders (*marzubān al-bādiya*) had an official in Medina who collected taxes there.

[1] Rothstein, pp. 134–8; Christensen, p. 270; Kister, pp. 165–7.

[2] Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. M. J. de Goeje *et al.* (Leiden, 1879–1901), I, 958; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 238; cf. Smith, p. 442, and Altheim and Stiehl v/1, 361–2.

[3] G. Olinder, "The Kings of Kinda of the Family of Ākil al-Murār", *Lunds Universitets Årsskrift*, n.f., Avd. I, xxiii/6 (Lund and Leipzig, 1927), 63–4; Kister, pp. 144–5.

Whether this *marzubān* was the Persian warden in eastern Arabia, sc. in Baḥrain or Hajar, or the official of the Persians' vassals, the Lakhmids, is unspecified;[1] but in any event, it looks as if a certain degree of Persian control was exercised over Medina through the agency of the Jewish tribes of al-Naḍīr and Quraiẓa. When after the middle of the 6th century the Arab tribes in Medina gained the upper hand over the Jews there, control and the collection of taxes there were apparently exercised by the Lakhmid al-Nu'mān III b. al-Mundhir III, who appointed 'Amr b. Iṭnāba al-Khazrajī as his representative in the oasis ("king of al-Madīna", in Ibn Sa'īd's words).[2]

This link between Ḥīra and Medina was one aspect of Lakhmid policy in regard to the Arabian tribes; agreements were made with powerful bedouin and other chiefs to supply troops for the Lakhmid army and to keep the caravan routes from Iraq across Arabia policed. The Lakhmids also derived part of their revenues from taxes (*itāwa*) levied on these friendly tribes, and the Arabic sources note a punitive raid undertaken by al-Nu'mān III against the Banū Tamīm, who had refused to pay taxes. Tamīm, of the north-Arab group of Muḍar, were indeed strenuous opponents of the Lakhmid attempts to impose their control on Najd; it was perhaps not entirely coincidental that at the time of the Muslim conquest of Iraq, Tamīm were in the van of the attacks on the Persians. On the other hand, cooperative chiefs were granted lands in Iraq by the Lakhmids or the Sasanians. Thus the chief of the Banū Shaibān, Qais b. Mas'ūd, was granted the district of Ubulla in Lower Iraq by Khusrau II Parvīz in return for a guarantee that the tribesmen of Bakr b. Wā'il (of which Shaibān was an important constituent) would not raid Persian territory in the Sawād of Iraq.[3] The Lakhmids were further adept at taking advantage of tribal feuds and vendettas within Arabia, playing off one group against its rivals.

Lakhmid designs in the peninsula were, however, frustrated in the early decades of the 6th century by the rise of the powerful central and northern Arabian confederation of tribes led by Kinda, whose chiefs, through their brief period of dominance, attained the epithet "kings" in Arabian history, leaving no lasting political memorial, but bequeathing to their descendants a pride in aristocratic Kindī lineage which endured all through the early Islamic period. Al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr

[1] The latter view is upheld by Altheim and Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt, 1957), pp. 149–50, see also *idem*, *Die Araber* v/1, 361–5.

[2] Cited in Kister, pp. 146–8.

[3] Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, cited in *ibid.* pp. 150–1.

al-Kindī, the Arethas of the Byzantine historians, succeeded in uniting the tribes of Najd, and *c.* 500 allied with the Byzantines against the Lakhmids and their Persian suzerains. In 503 al-Ḥārith attacked Ḥīra for the first time, doubtless encouraged by the Greeks and taking advantage of Sasanian internal weakness after the defeat by the Hephthalites in 489 and the succession to the throne of Kavād only with Hephthalite assistance. In ensuing years, al-Ḥārith extended his authority over the Arabs of the Iraq borders. Kavād was unable adequately to support al-Mundhir III; in 525 the Kinda chief captured Ḥīra itself, temporarily driving out the Lakhmid. According to the south Arabian tradition, al-Ḥārith then came to an agreement with Kavād by which the Euphrates or the canal of al-Sarā near the Tigris, not far from Ctesiphon, was fixed as the northern boundary of the Kinda confederacy; at this time, too, it is possible that al-Ḥārith may have exercised suzerainty along the Gulf coast as far as ʻUmān, possibly as a vassal of Kavād.

The Kindī interregnum in Ḥīra lasted three years only. Its termination was linked with the end of Kavād's reign and the anti-Mazdakite reaction in the Sasanian empire under the new emperor Khusrau I Anūshirvān (end of 528 or beginning of 529). Anūshirvān restored al-Mundhir to Ḥīra *c.* 527 or 528, and we infer from Greek sources that al-Ḥārith had to flee across the Syrian Desert to Byzantine territory, where he was appointed phylarch but soon afterwards died; al-Mundhir celebrated the regaining of his throne by a massacre of leading Kindīs. Al-Ḥārith's son Ḥujr was subsequently killed in a rising of the subject tribe of Asad against Kindī domination, and al-Mundhir encouraged dissension within the ruling family of Kinda. Thus the great rivals of the Lakhmids for control of northern and central Arabia were virtually wiped out; only towards the time of al-Mundhir's death (554) did a member of the old ruling family, Qais b. Salama, chief of Kinda and Maʻadd and governor for the Byzantines on the Palestine and Jordan fringes, manage to inflict a defeat on the Lakhmids.[1]

These events in north-eastern Arabia had their effect on political and religious happenings in south-eastern Arabia and South Arabia, spheres where the Sasanians were also in the 6th century endeavouring to extend their influence. A Sabaean inscription from Ma'rib mentions an embassy from Shammar Yuharʻish, King of Saba', Dhū Raidān, Ḥaḍra-

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 148–50; Rothstein, pp. 87ff; Olinder, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–93; Christensen, pp. 353–4, 356; Smith, pp. 445–7; A. Grohmann, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "al-ʻArab. (i) Ancient History"; N. V. Pigulevskaya, "Kinditui i Lakhmidui v V v. i nachale VI v.", *Palestinskiy Sbornik*, n.s. IX (1962), 80–104.

maut and Yamanat, to the chief of the tribe of *'sd* (? Azd rather than Asad, in the opinion of Müller) and then to the Persian twin capitals of Ctesiphon (Qaṭūsif) and Seleucia (Kūk). Shammar Yuhar'ish was one of the most powerful of the kings of Saba'-Ḥimyar, and flourished toward the end of the 3rd century; this information must relate to diplomatic exchanges, and perhaps military clashes, with the Sasanians in Iraq or their allies.[1] At this early date also, the emperors had been concerned about the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, the furthering of Persian commerce there and the preventing of traders from the Indian Ocean landing goods on coasts not controlled by the Persians and thus evading the payment of customs dues. Shāpūr II (309 or 310–79) carried on a vigorous policy against both the Arabs of the Syrian Desert, whom the Romans had incited against him, and against those of Baḥrain and eastern Arabia. Arabs from Baḥrain had crossed the Gulf and raided into the Persian heartland of Fārs. Shāpūr in turn led troops across the Gulf and advanced from Baḥrain into Yamāma. He defeated the Arabs there; he established frontier defences in Lower Iraq against the nomads, including a trench and rampart (the *khandaq Sābūr* of the Arabic sources); and he adopted the classic Persian tactic of carrying off tribesmen from Taghlib, Bakr b. Wā'il and Ḥanẓala for resettlement in Kirmān and Ahvāz. A recently described Sasanian settlement on an island off the tip of the Musandam peninsula in northern 'Umān, commanding the sea lane through the Straits of Hurmuz, may date from Shāpūr's time. Thus an important degree of direct Persian control was established in eastern Arabia, and with the stationing of Persian soldiers and officials there, Zoroastrianism came to be implanted. The pre-Islamic Arabian poets occasionally refer to Zoroastrian practices, and it must have been either in central Iraq or here in eastern Arabia where they came into contact with the faith (see below, p. 609). Shāpūr's draconian measures against the Arabs earned him the sobriquet in Arabic lore of Dhu'l-aktāf ("he who pierces, dislocates shoulders"), from his maltreatment of captives.[2]

'Umān belongs geographically to the Zagros mountain chains of southern Iran rather than to the plains of eastern Arabia, and for much of its history it has been linked politically and culturally with Iran. In

[1] W. W. Müller, "Eine sabäische Gesandtschaft in Ktesiphon und Seleukia", in *Neue Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, ed. R. Degen, W. W. Müller and W. Röllig II (Wiesbaden, 1974), 155–65.

[2] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 57ff; Rothstein, pp. 131–3; Christensen, p. 230; Altheim and Stiehl II, 327–8, 349–56; B. de Cardi, "A Sasanian Outpost in Northern Oman", *Antiquity* XLVI, 184 (1972), 305–10.

Sasanian times it was a Persian outpost, a link in the chain of positions from which the emperors were trying to control the Indian Ocean trade and to secure a foothold in the agriculturally rich regions of Ḥaḍramaut and Yemen, the famed *Arabia Felix* or *Arabia Odorifera*. The Persians knew ʿUmān as Mazūn, and under this latter name it seems already to have been regarded as part of Shāpūr I's empire, on the evidence of the Naqsh-i Rustam inscription.[1] There were Persian garrisons in places like Ṣuḥār and Rustāq, Ṣuḥār being the great commercial entrepôt for the Persians in ʿUmān and Rustāq their administrative centre. As well as trade, the Persians developed agriculture and irrigation in ʿUmān, and both the construction of cemented water channels from the inland mountains to the coastal settlements and the extensive digging of *qanāt*s conveying water from the mountain slopes date from the Sasanian period. Actual ethnic Persian settlement was considerable, and this not only on the coastal plain but also in the agricultural lands of the Jabal Akhḍar. Relations between these Persians and the Azdī Arabs of the interior were regulated in Khusrau Anūshirvān's time by a treaty, recognizing the rule over the Arabs of the tributary Āl Julandā; eventually, these Arab groups acquired a status as frontier auxiliaries somewhat akin to that of the Persians' other tributaries in Iraq and Baḥrain.[2]

III

The 6th century was a propitious time for Persian intervention in South Arabia. Political fragmentation, always a feature of the Yemen, with its petty princes, the *aqyāl* and *adhwā'*, increased with the decline of the old kingdom of Ḥimyar, and possibly with economic decay affecting South Arabian agriculture, a process symbolized in Arabian lore by the story of the breaking of the dam of Ma'rib and the alleged migration to northern Arabia of Arabs from the south. Confessional discords appeared as the old South Arabian polytheism fell into decay. Monophysite Christianity was implanted at Najrān in the interior of Yemen, where there was a flourishing community with a fine cathedral and its own bishop, and there were possibly older Christian elements in the coastlands, traditionally explained as having been evangelized by missionaries en route for India. The natural protector of these com-

[1] Maricq, "Res Gestae", pp. 336–7.

[2] J. C. Wilkinson, "The Origins of the Omani State", in D. Hopwood (ed.), *The Arabian Peninsula, Society and Politics* (London, 1972), pp. 71–3; *idem*, "Arab-Persian Land Relationships in Late Sāsānid Oman".

munities was Ethiopia, also Monophysite, and the rulers of Axum had ancient links with South Arabia and claimed in their titulature control over Ḥimyar, Dhū Raidān, Saba', etc. Judaism also had a following in the Yemen, and sectarian strife now broke out between the two monotheistic faiths. The Jewish communities acquired a leader in one Yūsuf, called in the Arabic sources Dhū Nuwās "the man with the forelock", who became a convert to the faith, perhaps with the main aim of counteracting the growing Christian and Ethiopian influence in his homeland. He had overcome rivals and secured the throne of Ḥimyar, apparently before 518, and towards 523 he unleashed a persecution of Christians in such places as Mokhā, Ẓofār and Najrān; the sufferings of the Christian community in Najrān were later held up by Muḥammad in the Qur'ān as an example of steadfastness, the fortitude of the *Aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd* "martyrs of the trench".[1]

News of these persecutions reached as far as Byzantium; at the request of Justinian, the Negus of Ethiopia landed in Yemen with a mighty army and occupied it in 525. It seems that Dhū Nuwās was encouraged in his anti-Christian policy by al-Mundhir III in Ḥīra, who was himself a pagan, but whose Christian subjects, the 'Ibād, were Nestorians and therefore hostile to Monophysitism anyway. When Dhū Nuwās had secured his bloody victories over the local Christians, he had written to al-Mundhir urging him to deal likewise with the Christians in his own kingdom. In the event, al-Mundhir was unable to provide Dhū Nuwās with any material help against the Ethiopians, for it was at this point that he was expelled from his capital by al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr of Kinda (see above); Dhū Nuwās was killed in battle, and a retaliatory persecution of the Jews begun.[2]

South Arabia now became an Ethiopian protectorate for nearly fifty years under one Abraha and his son Masrūq. Abraha was a former slave, who achieved virtually independent political authority; his long inscription, commemorating his restoration of the dam of Ma'rib records the reception of envoys (? before 539) from, *inter alios*, "the king of Fārs" and the Lakhmid al-Mundhir.[3] According to Procopius, Justinian tried to incite Abraha to march northwards and attack the Lakhmids and Persians in Iraq, but Abraha was reluctant to move.

[1] The correctness of the referring of the Qur'ānic *Aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd* to the martyrs of Najrān, a connection doubted by certain scholars, seems to be confirmed by a new Syriac source recently published by Irfan Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran: New Documents* (Brussels, 1971).

[2] Smith, pp. 456–63; Altheim and Stiehl v/1, 384ff.

[3] Complete text in Smith, pp. 437–41.

Eventually, he did lead a punitive expedition in 547 (year 662 of the Sabaean era) against the Arabs of Maʿadd and ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣaʿa in central Arabia, defeating the Maʿadd at Ḥalibān, on the caravan route from Najrān to Najd, whilst another section of the South Arabian army defeated the ʿĀmir at Turaba in the Ḥijāz; the raid towards South Arabia which had provoked Abraha's counter-attack was probably incited by the Lakhmids, who after the overthrow of Kinda had regained control of Maʿadd and other tribes of Najd. The Muraighān inscription, which records these events, states that ʿAmr b. al-Mundhir III (or perhaps ʿAmr b. ʿAmr b. al-Mundhir III), governor over Maʿadd on al-Mundhir's behalf, had to pledge his own life as guarantee of his tribesmen's peaceable conduct.[1]

The event by which Abraha is best known in later Islamic lore, the attack on the Kaʿba at Mecca, may well be identical, it has been suggested by J. Ryckmans and A. F. L. Beeston, with Abraha's move northwards to meet the Lakhmids' allies at Ḥalibān and the operations in the Ḥijāz at Turaba. The Arabic sources traditionally date the *ʿĀmat al-Fīl* "the Year of the Elephant" (sc. the year when the elephants of the South Arabian forces appeared before a surprised Meccan populace, but were providentially destroyed by divine intervention; cf. Qur'ān CV) as coinciding with Muḥammad's birth in Mecca, again traditionally fixed (though probably too early) in 570. The "Year of the Elephant" must incontrovertibly have fallen much earlier than 570, by which date the Persians were establishing themselves in Yemen, and it may well relate to the events of 547, when the Lakhmids, faced at this same time with an attack from the Ghassānids under al-Ḥārith b. Jabala – al-Mundhir III was to fall in battle in 554 fighting against the Ghassānids – found it advisable to come to terms.[2]

The unpopularity of Ethiopian troops garrisoned in South Arabia eventually provoked towards *c.* 570 a Yemenī nationalist reaction against Masrūq b. Abraha. The leader of this movement was Saif b. Dhī Yazan, whose father Abū Murra had lost his wife to Abraha; in medieval Islamic times there grew up a popular epic romance based on his exploits, transposed into the Islamic period but with the Ethiopian occupiers of South Arabia and the pagan Zanj or blacks as the villains. Saif b. Dhī Yazan negotiated first with the Byzantines, then with the

[1] G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes. Dixième série", *Le Muséon* LXVI (1953), 275–84; J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques sabéennes de l'Arabie centrale", *ibid.* pp. 339–42; A. F. L. Beeston, "Notes on the Mureighan Inscription", *BSOAS* XVI (1954), 389–92; Smith, pp. 435–7, 447.

[2] See Beeston, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "al-Fīl".

Lakhmid ʿAmr b. Hind (and b. al-Mundhir III) (554–69), and then directly with the Sasanian Anūshirvān. The latter was at first reluctant to intervene in a comparatively distant region, but in the end agreed to dispatch by sea a force of eight hundred cavalrymen, men originally destined for execution but now given a chance to redeem themselves in battle. Under their leader Vahrīz, this Persian force killed Masrūq and fought its way to Ṣanʿā', where Saif b. Dhī Yazan, who had accompanied the invaders, was installed as king of Ḥimyar and tributary of the Sasanians. When the protecting Persian garrison was withdrawn, a rising took place, Saif b. Dhī Yazan was killed and the Ethiopians reappeared. Hence Vahrīz returned, finally banishing Ethiopian influence decisively from Yemen and setting up Maʿdī Karib b. Saif b. Dhī Yazan as vassal ruler in Ṣanʿā'. A Persian occupation force remained in the Yemen till after the *hijra*, when Muḥammad came to an agreement with Bādhām, the Persian governor of that time, and then after Bādhām's death, with his son. Cut off from all hope of aid from Persia after the cataclysm of Heraclius' victories in Iraq, the colony of Persian officials and soldiers in the Yemen seems to have gone over to the new faith of Islam and to have helped the Muslim commanders suppress the revolt of the local prophet al-Aswad; these Persians had probably already been partially assimilated to their Arab environment, but their descendants, the so-called *Abnā'* or "Sons", remained a distinct group for some time in early Islam.[1]

Meanwhile, the Lakhmids, and consequently the Sasanians, had lost much of their influence in northern Arabia after the Lakhmid defeat in 554 at Qinnasrīn near Aleppo at the hands of al-Ḥārith b. Jabala ("the Day of Ḥalīma"). Within Medina, the Jews were losing their dominance, and thus Lakhmid influence in the Ḥijāz declined. Ghassānid pressure continued in the latter half of the century; in 570 al-Mundhir b. al-Ḥārith defeated a Lakhmid force under ʿAmr b. al-Mundhir III's brother Qābūs (the degree of Persian cultural influence among the Lakhmids being shown by the appearance of this typically Persian epic name, arabized from Kāvūs), and in 580 the Ghassānid ruler surprised and sacked Ḥīra itself. Al-Nuʿmān III b. al-Mundhir IV (*c.* 580–602) came to the throne shortly afterwards, and was the first Lakhmid to adopt Christianity. He was deposed by Khusrau Parvīz in 602. Arabic tradition connects this event with a specific cause, stemming from

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 264, 349–51; Christensen, pp. 368–9; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 121–3, 129–30; K. V. Zetterstéen, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "Abnā'".

al-Nu'mān's execution *c.* 600 of 'Adī b. Zaid, who had been educated at Ctesiphon and had acted at Khusrau's court as a secretary translating documents received from Ḥīra in Arabic. More probably, the emperor had come to resent Lakhmid independence and had now decided to take the defence of the desert borders into his own hands. The Persians placed in Ḥīra as al-Nu'mān's successor Iyās b. Qabīṣa al-Taghlibī (602–11), who came from a local Christian family, but by his side there reigned the Persian marzbān Nakhvirgān.[1]

The Persians were not destined to exercise for long this degree of closer control over the former Lakhmid territories. Arab lore and legend make much of "The Day of Dhū Qār", which fell at some point between 604 and 611, and which was provoked either by Arab discontent at al-Nu'man's deposition or, more probably, by a feeling among the bedouins of north-eastern Arabia that the frontier of the sown lands was now more open and vulnerable. Whether Dhū Qār – a watering-place near the later settlement of Kūfa – was merely a skirmish or a full-scale battle is unclear, but bedouins of Bakr b. Wā'il and Shaibān, using coats of mail and weapons brought out from Ḥīra by al-Nu'mān, defeated a combined force of other Arabs from Taghlib, Iyād, etc. and regular Persian cavalry under their commander Hāmarz, pursuing the latter back into the Sawād. The importance of the clash was as much symbolic and psychological as anything else; Arab lore vaunts it as showing to the Arabs that the Persians were not invincible: in the words of a tradition attributed to the Prophet, "It is the first time that the Arabs have got the upper hand of the Persians, and it is through me that God has helped them."[2]

A probable legacy of Dhū Qār was the fact that it was the Bakr b. Wā'il under al-Muthannā b. Ḥāritha al-Shaibānī who, aware of Persian weakness, in 633 invited the Muslim leader Khālid b. al-Walīd to attack Iraq and Ḥīra, a campaign which led to the surrender of Ḥīra and its rapid decline in the early Islamic period under competition from the newly founded *miṣr* or armed camp of Kūfa and later from the city of Baghdad.[3] The Persian position in eastern Arabia along the Gulf shore also became untenable at this time. In 629–30 al-'Alā' b. 'Abd-Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī appeared in Baḥrain, and the Persian marzubān of Hajar,

[1] Rothstein, pp. 96–120.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 120–3; Goldziher I, 103–4 (translation, I, 100); L. Veccia Vaglieri, in *Encycl. of Islam*[2], "Dhū Ḳār"; A. I. Kolesnikov, "Strazhenie pri Zū-Ḳāre", *Palestinskiy Sbornik* n.s. XIX (1969), 76–86.

[3] See B. Spuler, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1952), p. 7, with the sources detailed.

Sēbukht, and some of his retinue, came over to Islam. Others, however, remained faithful to Zoroastrianism, as did some of the Persians in 'Umān; these Majūs became liable to the *jizya* or poll-tax like the Jews and Christians, the concept of who constituted "the People of the Book" being thereby *de facto* extended.[1]

IV

The cultural and intellectual influence exercised by Sasanian Persia over Arabia is not easy to quantify, but was clearly of significance, especially upon those Arabs of the north-eastern and northern parts of the peninsula in contact with Persian Iraq or with Persian colonies in eastern Arabia. Some of the Bakrī tribe of 'Ijl settled in Baḥrain among Persian agriculturist immigrants from Iṣṭakhr in Fārs and became assimilated to them; later, christianized 'Ijlīs fought on the Persian side at the battle of Ullais in 634.[2] This is not the place to discuss the religious heritage of Iran as it affected the birth and subsequent development of the Arabian faith of Islam, although the question has attracted the attention of several scholars.[3] It has, however, been noted that the frequently found concept of fatalism in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, the ideas of the vicissitudes of fate, *ṣurūf al-zamān*, and the ravages of time or *dahr*, correspond to Iranian Zurvanite ideas of time and destiny; but these may all stem from a fatalistic strain in Near Eastern religion in general.[4]

We are on firmer ground in discussing Persian influences on Arabic culture and literature, mediated, in particular, via the Lakhmids. Many of the greatest poets of the Jāhiliyya came to Ḥīra seeking the help and patronage of the rulers there, such as 'Abīd b. al-Abraṣ, al-Mutalammis, Ṭarafa, 'Amr b. Kulthūm, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, Maimūn b. Qais al-A'shā, Labīd and Ḥassān b. Thābit; and it was in turn al-Mundhir III's intervention which brought to an end the protracted and demoralizing War of Basūs between Bakr and Taghlib *c.* 525.[5] A 9th-century Arabic

[1] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1866), pp. 77ff.

[2] Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866–73) II, 179; Goldziher I, p. 103 (translation, I, 100); W. Montgomery Watt, in *Encycl. of Islam*², "'Idjl".

[3] Notably W. Caskel, H. S. Nyberg, G. Widengren and J. Duchesne-Guillemin. Goldziher first adumbrated the thesis of definite Iranian influence in the earliest Islam in his paper "Islam et Parsisme", *RHR* XLIII (1901), 1–29; see for further references, G. Pfannmüller, *Handbuch der Islam-Literatur* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1923), pp. 111–12.

[4] See Ringgren, *Arabian Fatalism*, pp. 41–6.

[5] Cf. R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe* (Paris, 1952–66) II, 293–304, ch. "La poésie dans l'ambience de Ḥīra".

literary critic adverts to al-Aʿshā's fondness for using Persian words, saying "al-Aʿshā used to visit the court of the kings of Persia, and because of that, Persian words abound in his poetry"; verses which this same critic quotes here illustrate the poet's use of Persian words to designate musical instruments, including the *ṣanj* (NP *chang*) "lute", the *nāy* "flute" and the *barbaṭ* "harp".[1]

This particular poet's adoption of Persian terms for musical instruments illustrates an obvious point: Persian words tended to be borrowed by the Arabs for objects and concepts which their own desert *ʿarabiyya*, despite its famed richness, lacked, viz. for cultural and, to a lesser extent, religious and ethical terms. Many pre-Islamic poets refer to the external features of Persian life and manners with which they obviously had direct contact, such as the insignia and practices of monarchical power; the weapons and mailed coats of Persian soldiers; the distinctive clothing and headgear of the Persians; and the sacred fires, the priests' chanting and other ceremonies connected with Zoroastrianism.[2]

Hence it is not surprising that it was from the Persians that the Arabs obtained words like *tāj* "crown" (MP *tāg*), already in the al-Namāra inscription of Mar' al-Qais and in several pre-Islamic and mukhaḍram poets,[3] and *dirʿ* "chain mail" (< **dirih* < OP *drāda-*; cf. also Avestan *zrāδa-*, MP *zrēh*, NP *zirih*). In the Qur'ān we find some Persian words denoting theological or moral figures and concepts, such as *ʿifrīt* "demon" (early MP *afrītan*, later MP *āfrīdan* "to create", hence "creature"), and *junāḥ* "crime" (< late MP and NP *gunāh* < earlier MP *wināh* "crime, sin"). But especially noteworthy are terms relating to Paradise and the delights there for the elect: *firdaus* "Paradise" itself (< Avestan *pairidaēza*, passing into Greek and most Middle Eastern languages, and probably via the Christians of Iraq into Arabic); *istabraq* "silk brocade" (MP *stabrag* < *stabr* "thick, strong"), worn by the dwellers in Paradise; *namāriq* "cushions" (Parthian *namr*, MP and NP *narm* "soft"), on which the saved will loll; and *rauḍa* "well-watered meadow or garden", as in Paradise (perhaps < MP *rōd* "river", and hence from the Iraqi milieu). Clearly, when Muḥammad wished to impress his followers by describing the joys in store for the righteous – and perhaps to counter the influence of his rival in Mecca, al-Naḍr b.

[1] Ibn Quṭaiba, *Kitāb al-shiʿr wa'l-shuʿarā'*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1900), pp. 136–7.
[2] Goldziher I, 102–3 (translation, I, 99).
[3] M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* II (Giessen, 1903–7), 34–6.

al-Ḥārith, who told stories of the Persian heroes Rustam and Isfandiyār and distracted the Prophet's audience – he not infrequently had recourse to Persian terms, for the splendours and luxury of Persian court life were proverbial in early Arabia.[1]

It is, of course, the task of the philologist to endeavour to discover whether these and other Persian loan-words came into early Arabic directly from Middle Persian via the courts of Iraq or the Persian colonies in eastern Arabia, or through the intermediacy of other Semitic languages which had borrowed Iranian words, such as Aramaic and later, Syriac. Some forms clearly came into Arabic via Syriac. A parallel form to *dirʿ* "chain mail" is *ẓard* (in the Qur'ān xxxiv.10–11 as *ṣard*), describing the mailed coats which David is commanded to make, which must have come via Syriac *ẓardā*; *sirbāl*, in the Qur'ān in two places meaning "garment", but in pre-Islamic poetry more specifically "shirt, coat of mail", later Arabic plural form *sarāwīl* "breeches, trousers", is from MP (and NP) *shalvār* via Syriac *sharbālā*; and *al-Majūs* "the Magians, Zoroastrians" is from OP *magūš* via Syriac *magōshā* (the MP form is unattested, but was presumably **moγ*). Occasionally, the absence of a Persian loan-word from other Semitic languages points to direct borrowing, as with *junāḥ*, which is not found in Syriac and was probably borrowed from spoken Persian; and some Arabic forms preserve the Middle Persian ending *-ag* > NP *-a*, such as *istabraq* and *khandaq* "trench" (used to designate the defensive ditch dug by Muḥammad to protect Medina against the Meccan besiegers, allegedly on the advice of a Persian convert, Salmān al-Fārisī), < MP **kandag*, NP *kanda* "dug, excavated".[2] Borrowings from Persian inevitably increased in the post-Islamic period, when Persians became integrated into the political and social fabric of Islam. In particular, the concept of *adab*, polite education and culture, owed much to Persian cultural and ethical models; but all these linguistic and cultural trends were really the continuation and acceleration of processes whose beginnings can be discerned in the pre-Islamic period.

Outside the linguistic and literary field, it is more difficult to assess Persian cultural influence on the early Arabs, owing to the paucity of surviving buildings and artifacts in the Arab lands and the problems

[1] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat al-nabī*, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1859–60), I, pp. 235–6, tr. A. Guillaume as *The Life of Muhammad* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 162–3; according to traditional exegesis, Qur'ān xxxi. 5, refers to this.

[2] For information on Persian loan-words in early Arabic see the works of Siddiqi and Jeffery. However, the whole topic requires fresh study in the light of recent advances in Iranian and Arabic philology.

of accurately dating the objects which have survived. In the sphere of architecture, Persian influence on the buildings of the Lakhmids, such as the palace of Khawarnaq, must have been decisive, and Persian models must have dominated the architecture of early Islamic Iraq. There would have been several splendid Persian buildings still standing in Iraq after the Islamic conquest for the Arabs to admire – the ruins of Parthian Hatra, the Ṭāq-Īwān of Shāpūr II at Karkh, the Ṭāq-i Kisrā at Ctesiphon, etc. – and Persian architects and craftsmen were doubtless utilized. A structure like Ukhaiḍir, now in the desert thirty miles south-west of Karbalā', cannot have been architecturally and stylistically a creation *de novo*; Creswell was probably right in dating it to the early 'Abbāsid period, after 775, though Dieulafoy had suggested that it was built for a Persian governor in Ḥīra in the opening decades of the 7th century.[1]

Persian artistic influences also penetrated across the Syrian desert to the structures of the Umayyad caliphs on the fringes of modern Syria and Jordan, where there was a symbiosis with the local hellenistic and Byzantine artistic and architectural traditions. Thus at Mshatta (probably dating from 743–4), the mythical animals in the vine tendrils of the stucco decoration, and the tulip motif there, seem to be Sasanian in inspiration, whilst the celebrated mural of the "Enemies of Islam" at the bath of Quṣair 'Amra (probably dating from *c.* 712–15) was viewed by Herzfeld as characteristically Persian in its arrangement of the kings of the world doing homage to the caliph-emperor.[2] Above all, Richard Ettinghausen has recently shown that the Throne Hall in the palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar (dating from the caliph Hishām's reign, 724–43) was created with many of the trappings and decorative motifs of such Sasanian palaces as that of Ctesiphon, even though the basic structure was of local, Byzantine inspiration.[3]

[1] See Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* II, 94ff.
[2] *Ibid.* II, 268–9.
[3] "The Throne and Banqueting Hall of Khirbat al-Mafjar", in *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World, Three Modes of Artistic Influence* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 17–65.

CHAPTER 17

IRANO-TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE LATE SASANIAN PERIOD

Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma*, completed at the beginning of the 11th century A.D. and incorporating epic material from earlier times, describes the battles between two equally courageous peoples, the Iranians and the Turanians. The word Tūrān is unrelated to the word Turk but since, from the 6th century on, the Turks, who had migrated from Central Asia, came to play a decisive role in the history of the Iranian peoples, by association it came to be applied – mistakenly – to these new arrivals.

At Panjikant in Sogdiana (in present-day Tājīkistān, 60 km east of Samarkand), there is a wall painting dating probably from the 8th century A.D.,[1] which depicts a scene of mourning for some young prince; near the catafalque are male mourners with brown hair and light skins, while a little further off, in the foreground, are others of a different ethnic type, having black hair, a darker skin and prominent hooked noses. The two groups possibly represent Sogdians and Turks, but we cannot say for sure which is which (fig. 3, p. 1146).

Another wall painting of the same period,[2] from Afrāsiyāb (the northern part of the town of Samarkand) in Sogdiana, shows the dignified figure of an envoy mounted on a camel; the envoy's features – large, round eyes and a prominent nose – are those usually attributed to foreigners[3] and in particular to the Sogdians by the Uigurs from Qočo (Turfan in the Tarim basin) (pls 142–3).

These examples may serve to illustrate the inter-relation of the older Iranian peoples with the newly-arrived Turks in Central Asia and Iran in the early Middle Ages. It may here be relevant to mention some of those peoples who, though remote from the centre of Iranian civilization in Sasanian times, spoke languages which can be classified as Middle Iranian.

In the region of the upper Oxus a kingdom had been founded by the so-called Hephthalites. In 565 A.D. they were defeated by joint forces of

[1] A. Zu. Yakubovskii, *Živopis' Drevnego Pjandžikenta* (Moscow, 1954), pl. xx.
[2] L. I. Albaum & B. Brentjes, *Wächter des Goldes* (Berlin (East), 1972), p. 206, pl. 157.
[3] A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho* (Berlin, 1913), pl. 22, bottom, right.

Sasanians and Turks, but as late as the 8th century, Chinese sources are still found referring to a "king of the Hephthalites", although since their defeat the Hephthalites appear to have been subjected to a Turkish overlord. According to Chinese sources, they shared the same way of life as the Turks, both being nomads, but the nature of the cultural exchanges between the two peoples has yet to be established. For their coinage, the Hephthalites developed a special kind of writing, derived from the Kushān script, and samples of it found in Turfan show that their written language was Middle Iranian.[1] It must be assumed, then, that the spoken language of at least part of the Hephthalites was also Middle Iranian.

More important for the study of Turkish culture are the Sakas (Scythians) whose language was also Middle Iranian. These Scythians, who were known to the Old Persians and Greeks from as early as 600 B.C., held sway from the Pontic Steppes to the river Jaxartes until around the start of the 5th century A.D. In the 2nd century A.D., they became overlords of north-west India, and the Chinese refer to them by the character *sək* (Sai in southern Farghāna).[2] On the whole, however, they had little intercourse with Turkish peoples, apart from skirmishes with those nomads. One branch of the Sakas who founded a kingdom in Khotan (in the Tarim basin) were zealous Buddhists who may have been converts from Zoroastrianism (but not from Zurvanism or Manichaeism). In the early period, the technical terms of Buddhism in the Saka language had reflected a late Indian spirit with influences from Prakrit, but from the time of the well-known Chinese pilgrim and Buddhist translator of the 7th century, Hsüan-tsang, these were mostly derived from the Sanskrit of the Sarvāstivādins. Documents in Saka language, written on leather, wood or paper, and dating from the 7th to the 10th centuries, have been found in Khotan and in Tumshuq (T'ien-shan nan-lu, "Silk road south of the T'ien-shan"); these documents are written in the Indian Brāhmī script and show a number of linguistic variants between the two districts.[3] Manuscripts found in Murtuq (in the oasis of Turfan) have twelve additional characters to denote Iranian sounds foreign to Sanskrit phonetics.[4] These "new" characters are also found in some Turkish manuscripts in the Brāhmī

[1] O. Hansen, "Die Berliner Hephtaliten-Fragmente", *La Nouvelle Clio* III (Brussels, 1951), pp. 41–69; O. Hansen, "Ein neues Hephtaliten-Fragment", *La Parola del Passato* VI (Naples, 1951), pp. 361–5. [See also pp. 212ff in this vol.]

[2] Cf. e.g., G. Haloun, "Zur Üe-tṣï-Frage", *ZDMG* XCI (1937), pp. 251–2.

[3] See chapter 7, pp. 265ff. Ed.

[4] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 40–58, 72–89; Bailey, "Languages of the Saka"; S. Konow, "Ein neuer Saka-Dialekt", *SPAW* 1935, pp. 772–823.

script[1] which may have been written by Sakas or Tokharians after they had fallen under the dominance of the Turkish language.

Another people of the same language group of great importance for the culture of the Turks are the Sogdians. Their homeland, Sogdiana, with its capital Marakanda, later to be known as Samarqand, had suffered under the occupation of Alexander the Great and many had fled to seek a new home further east.[2] Samarqand's importance on the Silk Road from Ch'ang-an to Byzantium must have stimulated an interest in trade with the east, and Sogdians founded numerous settlements along this caravan route without, however, establishing a kingdom of their own. Among the extant Sogdian manuscripts are the "Ancient letters" on paper dating from the beginning of the 4th century A.D., found near Tun-huang in north west China and addressed to their commercial centre in Samarqand. According to one of them, there were at that time about a hundred Sogdian princes from Samarqand in Tun-huang. Other manuscripts in Sogdian have been found elsewhere, particularly in Turfan, most of which date to the 9th or 10th century, but with a few from the 8th and 11th. From Mount Mugh in present day Tājīkistān come some commercial letters written on leather by a Sogdian *dēwāstīč* ("small king"), dating to the time of the Arab conquest in the beginning of the 8th century; one of them is written in "Runic" script (see below p. 622) but it has not, to date, been convincingly interpreted.

Extant Sogdian Buddhist texts are mostly translations from Chinese and are comparatively late in date. But the Sogdians themselves must have been Buddhists from much earlier times, for from the 2nd century A.D. colophons of Chinese Buddhist texts refer to translators into Chinese from An (Bukhārā) and K'ang-kü (Samarkand and its neighbourhood).[3] Further proof of this is supplied by archaeology, although, as yet, only fragments of statues have been found. Sogdian Buddhism, however, showed the influence of the former religion of the country, Zoroastrianism, which appears to have staged a revival in Sasanian times. In 630, Hsüan-tsang came across only ruins of Buddhist temples, while former Buddhist monasteries had been given over to the Zoroastrians.[4]

Buddhism was not the only religion found among the Sogdians in

[1] A. von Gabain, "Türkische Turfantexte VIII, Texte in Brāhmīsschrift", *APAW* 1952.7.
[2] H. H. Schaeder, "Iranica", *AAWG* 1934, pp. 43–50.
[3] B. Nanjio, *A catalogue of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka* (Oxford, 1883), Appendix II, pp. 379ff.
[4] S. Julien, tr., *Histoire de la vie de Hiouen-thsang par Hui-li et Yen-thsong* (Paris, 1853) (*Voyages des pèlerins bouddhistes* 1).

addition to Zoroastrianism. The syncretistic religion founded in the 3rd century A.D. by Mānī was at first favoured by the Sasanian king Shāpūr I (241–72) but later banned, and Mānī himself was killed. Many of his followers fled, either west to Egypt, or east to Mongolia, the Tarim basin and as far as the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an, where they were allowed to establish a cultural centre. Many fine Manichaean texts in Sogdian have been found in Turfan and Tun-huang.

Nestorian Christianity also existed in Sogdiana, the Tarim basin and China, and many Sogdian and some Turkish manuscripts with Christian content have been discovered in Turfan and in particular in the village of Bulayiq. The Christian–Chinese stele of Si-an-fu of 781 A.D. is well-known.

Other cultural influences reached the Turks from non-Iranian peoples. For instance, there had been Chinese settlers in the Tarim basin since the military activities of the Han Dynasty in the 2nd century B.C.; there were the Tokharians of Kuča, who spoke a west Indo-European language; and the Tibetans in the southern part of the Tarim basin. Further east, the Tabghach, a people of an Altaic language, ruled over the northern part of China in the 5th–6th century A.D., but by the time of the earliest Turks their kingdom of "Northern Wei" was in a state of decline. All these peoples were now eclipsed by the Sasanians, the fame of whose civilization spread throughout Central Asia.

In the Chinese dynastic histories the term "Turk" is mentioned for the first time in a reference under the year 552 A.D. to a people who, at least in the eastern half of their empire, called themselves Kök-Türk. Up to that date they had been under the rule of the Juan-juan, a people of uncertain race and language, but who, like them, were nomads and horse breeders. In 552, however, the Turks rebelled against their overlords and their ruler adopted the tital of Qaghan, that is, virtually ruler over the peoples of the steppes, a title which had been well-known in Central Asia since the 3rd century. The Turkish empire of the steppes quickly spread to the south as far as the borders of China, to the west as far as the Aral Sea and to the south west as far as Bactria, controlling even the kingdoms of the Tarim basin. Except for a break of three generations, their empire lasted until the middle of the 8th century when it was overthrown by the Uigurs who dominated the steppes for approximately a hundred years. In 840, they were defeated by the Kirghiz Turks and the survivors fled south, south west and west. The bulk of the refugees came to Turfan where they founded a king-

dom which lasted, partly under Mongol supremacy, up till modern times.[1]

The Kök-Türks worshipped the God of Heaven, an Earth Goddess and the spirits of their ancestors. At the end of the 6th century, Buddhists from north China sent the Qaghan a Buddhist canonical text entitled *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*[2] in an attempt to convert his people. The Chinese sources which mention this fact do not state into which language the text was translated from the original Sanskrit, but it was probably Sogdian, which was widely used at that time. In 568, the Western Turkish Qaghan Istämi sent an envoy to the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II on a trade mission, choosing, not a Turk, but the Sogdian Maniak who took with him a letter in "Scythian characters" which the Emperor made his interpreter translate for him. Again, in 841 it was a Christian Sogdian from Samarkand, by the name of Nešfarn, whom the Uigur Qaghan chose to send to the king of Tibet and who left an inscription in Sogdian added to a Nestorian cross in Ladakh in the course of his journey. As for the oldest known inscription of the Old Turks, that of Bugut in Mongolia, it, too, is written in Sogdian (see below p. 621).[3] In fact, in the 6th century the Turkish language was not sufficiently developed to be able to express the involved concepts of Buddhism. Thus it is more than likely that the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* sent to the Qaghan of the steppes had been translated, not into Turkish, but into Sogdian which would have been familiar to the Turks of the upper classes.

This 6th century mission must have been successful, although there is no reference to this in Chinese or other sources: the basic technical terms and proper names of Old Turkish (Uigur) Buddhism show the influence of Sogdian teachers in that they are predominately derived, not from Sanskrit, the sacred language of Buddhism, but from Middle Iranian and, in particular, Sogdian. Some words even betray the Zoroastrian past of the Sogdians.[4]

The following Uigur words are derived from Sogdian:

aǯun "existence" < Sog. *''ʒwn*
nom "Buddhist teaching, law" < Sog. *nwm* < Gk. *nomos*
dindar "Buddhist monk, Manichaean elect" < Sog. *δynδ'r*

[1] Spuler, "Geschichte Mittelasiens".
[2] A. von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission", in J. Schubert and U. Schneider (eds.), *Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller* (Leipzig, 1954), pp. 161–73.
[3] S. Kljaštornyj and V. A. Livshits, "The Sogdian inscription of Bugut revised", *AOH* XXVI, pp. 69–102.
[4] A. von Gabain, *Alttürkische Grammatik* (Wiesbaden, 1974), Glossary, pp. 315–89.

midik "layman" < Sog. *myδ'kk*
nizwani "sin" < Sog. *nyzβ'an*
az "greed" < MP from Turfan *''zh*
ančman "community of monks" < Sog. *'nčmn*
tamu "hell" < Sog. *tmw*
wusanti "fast time" < Sog. *βws'nty*
äzrua "(god) Brahma" < Sog. *'zrw'*
χormuzda "(god) Indra" < Sog. *χwrmwzδ*
šimnu "the devil" < Sog. *šmnw*
noš "elixir" < Sog. *nwš*

These Sanskrit words in Uigur have a Middle Iranian ending:

šamnanč "nun" < Sog. *šmn'nčh*
upasanč "lay sister" < Sog. *wp's'nčh*

The following Uigur words derived from Sanskrit show modifications from Middle Iranian:

darm "Buddhist teaching, law" < Sog. *δrm* < Skr. *dharma*
bodisawat < Sog. *pwδsβt* < Skr. *bodhisattva*
nirwan < Sog. *nyrβ'n* < Skr. *nirvāṇa*
bursang "community of monks" < Sog. *pwrsnk*(') < Skr. *buddha* and *saṅgha*
čaxšapat "commandments" < Sog. *čxš'pδ* < Skr. *śikṣāpada*
r(*a*)*xant* "advanced monk" < Sog. *rγ'nt* < Skr. *arhant*
šasan "discipline" < Saka *śśāsaṃ* < Skr. *śāsana*
tužit "name of one of the heavens" < Saka < Skr. *tuṣita*
upasi "layman" < Sog. *'wp'sy* < Skr. *upāsaka*
w(*i*)*rχar* "monastery" < Sog. *βrγ''r* < Skr. *vihāra*
ästup "reliquary tower" or "shrine" < Sog. *'stwph* < Skr. *stūpa*
maytri "name of the Buddha of the Future" < Sog. *m'ytr* < Skr. *maitreya*
kšan "very short moment" < Sog. *kšn* < Skr. *kṣaṇa*
samir "name of a mythical mountain" < Sog. *sm'yr* < Skr. *sumeru*
šlok "verse" < *šl'wk* < Skr. *śloka*
wačir "thunderbolt" < Sog. *βž'yr* < Skr. *vajra*

From this large number of Middle Iranian elements in fundamental Uigur Buddhism it is clear that it was neither the Indians nor the Chinese but the Sogdians who first brought about the conversion of the Turks to their religion. (These missionary activities were later carried on by the Tokharians, for most Sanskrit technical terms of Buddhism in Uigur have been modified in some way by Tokharian. This second wave of missionary activity must have taken place under Tokharian and Chinese influence when, after the fall of the empire of the steppes, the Uigurs came to Qočo which was mostly Buddhist.)

Every religion undergoes some change in form and practice when it spreads beyond the boundaries of its original birthplace. Thus, the first

Buddhists in north central India had not attempted to represent the Buddha nor to develop a definite iconography of the saints. This was achieved under the influence of the Graeco-Indian and Middle Iranian spirit of Gandhara, Bactria and Sogdiana, when artists began to develop a standardized representation of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, gods, demons etc. It found its way to the Tarim basin and even as far as China and Japan; for example sacred heroes such as the Four Lords of the Heavenly Quadrants, Vajrapāni, the Buddha's bodyguard and the gods Indra and Brahma are depicted clad in armour derived either from the Parthians or the Sasanians; and the magnificent diadems of the gods and the Bodhisattvas have their prototype in Sasanian Iran.

As was the case with the Chinese, the popular Buddhism of the Uigurs was influenced by the ideas and images of Iranian religion; for instance, the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism is the law of retribution in some future existence for all good and evil deeds, called *karma*, a doctrine that was perhaps softened, possibly by filial piety, under the influence of Zoroastrianism. According to non-canonical Buddhist texts, every dead person has seven days, twice seven, three times seven up to seven times seven days, a hundred days, three hundred days and then three years to submit to the judgment of the Ten Kings of Purgatory. Two young men or one man and one woman bring scrolls recording the good and evil deeds he has done in his lifetime, while he sees in a mirror all his sins. In a vision he is shown the six rebirths (Skr. *gati*) possible according to his past behaviour: as god, man, animal, hungry ghost (Skr. *preta*), demon (Skr. *asura*) or inhabitant of hell (Skr. *nāraka*). In an illustrated Uigur scroll,[1] the "animal" existence is symbolized by a goat and a wolf whom the Buddhist teachers thus debased to represent one of the lower forms of existence, the wolf being as much the sacred animal of the pre-Buddhist Turks as the goat had been of the Zoroastrian Iranians. Many of the symbols and pictures are known from older Iranian prototypes.[2] According to Buddhist teaching, redemption followed if the dead person's family recited and copied holy texts on his behalf. A holy guide, called "Storehouse of the earth" (Skr. *kṣitigarbha*) would then appear to the terrified soul and lead him to Amitābha, the Buddha of Eternal Light, in his Western Paradise. The idea of "Light" and "West" also suggest some Iranian origin.[3]

Manichaeism came to the Uigurs through the Sogdians of Ch'ang-an.

[1] A. von Gabain, *Kṣitigarbha-Kult in Zentralasien*; *Indologen-Tagung 1971* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 47–71, pl. 77.

[2] A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion" in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* II (Strassburg, 1896–1904), pp. 684ff.

[3] [See further pp. 556f.]

In 762, the Uigur emperor of the steppes came to Ch'ang-an with a strong army to support the Chinese emperor in his struggle against the insurgent An Lu-shan, and after defeating him, the Qaghan together with some of his people remained in the neighbourhood of the capital, where he was in contact with Chinese civilization. Here he became acquainted with and impressed by Manichaeism as practised by the Sogdians and he asked for Manichaean missionaries to be sent to him when he returned home. An account of the ensuing scene has been preserved both by a contemporary Uigur report[1] and by a Sogdian miniature:[2] four Sogdian missionaries arrived at the Qaghan's court and for a whole night he discoursed with them; finally, at dawn, the emperor put on a golden diadem (*didim* < Sog. *δīδῐ̄m-* < Gk.), dressed himself in the purple cloak (*al ton*, the *paludamentum* of the Byzantine emperor), and seated himself on the golden throne (*altunluγ örgin*), another Sasanian importation, for the Sasanians used to sit at ease on chairs with their feet crossed and pointing downwards. He then proclaimed Manichaeism in place of Buddhism as the new religion of the empire.

The Sogdian origins for Uigur Manichaeism are also seen in the Middle Iranian derivations of the titles of the hierarchy and of a number of technical terms found in Uigur Manichaean texts, as, for instance, the following:

amvardišn "assembly, collection" < Parth. *'mwrdyšn*
anošagan "immortals" < MP from Turfan *'nwšg-'n*
arqon "the First" < Sog. < Gk. *árχon*
bača- "to pay attention" < Sog. **p'č*, *p'-* "to pay attention"
bogtag "redeemed" < MP from Turfan *bwχtg*
frišti "messenger, angel" < Sog. *fryšty*
maχistak "presbyter" < MP from Turfan *mhystg*
manistan "dwelling" < MP from Turfan *m'nyst'n*
mardaspant "element" < Sog. *mrd'spnd*
mož̌ag "archbishop" < Sog. *mwčk*
niγošak "Manichaean layman" < *nγwš'k*
niw "hero" < Mid. Parth. *nyw*
patγamwar "apostle" < Sog. *ptγ'mbr*
pärikän "female sorcerers" < MP *pryg'n*
quštr "Manichaean presbyter" < Sog. *xwštr*
waχšig "tutelary genius", cf. MP *wxš*
χiar "friend" < MP from Turfan *ẖy'r*

[1] W. Bang and A. von Gabain, "Türkische Turfan-Texte II", *SPAW* 1929, pp. 411–22.

[2] A. von Le Coq, *Die buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien II, Die Manichäischen Miniaturen* (Berlin, 1923; repr. Graz, 1973), pl. 8[a]a.

Many Turkish Manichaean texts are translations from the Middle Iranian, such as the *X^{w}astwānīft*,[1] a prayer of confession with dogmatic introduction, and some hymns. Other hymns, of high literary value, are of Turkish origin.

Buddhist terms are frequently used in Turkish Manichaean texts, although their meaning has changed; in this respect, they resemble the Manichaean Sogdian texts which had been grafted on to Buddhist stock. The Turks also had recourse, though to a limited extent, to Middle Iranian for their liturgy, as is proved by some texts in Kök-Türk "Runic" writing.[2]

Nestorian Christianity must have been preached to the Turks not only by Syriac monks but also by Sogdian missionaries, for many Christian texts both in Syriac and in Sogdian have been found in the village of Bulayiq (in the oasis of Turfan), together with a few Turkish fragments.[3] The Uigar version of the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus gives evidence of this missionary activity among fire worshippers, in other words among the Iranian people.

There is also evidence in Hsüan-tsang's report of a fire cult amongst the Turks of the western Qaghanate of the steppe in the 7th century, while, in the inscription to the memory of prince Kültegin of A.D. 733, which mentions *öd tängri*, "the God of Time", there is even a suggestion of Iranian Zurvānism.[4]

There are many more borrowings from Middle Iranian in Turkish culture to be mentioned. Although the Turks learned writing soon after the foundation of their empire, their oldest inscription, as we have seen (see above p. 617), was in Sogdian, the lingua franca of the time, and in the Sogdian script, as is shown in the inscription near Bugut. Only with the beginnings of nationalism at the start of the 8th century did the Kök-Türk, and later the Uigur Qaghans in the 9th century, write their inscriptions in their own language alongside a version in Chinese or Chinese and Sogdian.[5] The script used for these

[1] W. Bang, "Manichäische Laien-Beichtspiegel", *Le Muséon* XXXVI (1923), pp. 137–242.

[2] A. von Le Coq, "Köktürkisches aus Turfan", *SPAW* 1909, pp. 1047–61.

[3] W. Bang, "Türkische Bruchstücke einer nestorianischen Georgspassion", *Le Muséon* XXXIX (1926), pp. 41–75.

[4] V. Thomsen, "Inscriptions de l'Orkhon déchiffrées", *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* V (Helsingfors, 1896), pp. 131–2 (north side, line 10).

[5] L. Bazin, "Turcs et Sogdiens, Les enseignements de l'inscription de Bugut – Mongolie", in *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Émile Benveniste* (Paris, 1975) (Collection linguistique publiée par la Société de Linguistique de Paris, LXX); L. Bazin, "Cosmopolitisme et nationalisme dans le développement des langues turques", in X. de Planhol (ed.), *Symposium sur l'acculturation des peuples turques, Paris 20.X.1975* (not yet published).

inscriptions, the so-called Kök-Türk "Runic" writing, was a lively adaptation, perhaps by a Sogdian, of cursive Aramaic, and indeed the Sogdian, "Uigur" and Manichaean scripts can all be attributed to the epigraphical inventiveness of the Sogdians. (For manuscripts in Brāhmī script, see above p. 614). Most Uigur manuscripts are written in "late Sogdian" or "Uigur" script; Old Turkish books were first written in the shape of codices like many Sogdian texts, but this format was later supplanted by the Indian palm-leaf books or the Chinese scroll.

Although they referred to it as *bir* (<Ch. *pi* < *piĕt*), the writing implement used by the Uigurs was not the brush of the Chinese but the reed pen, *qalam* (< Sog. < Gk. *κάλαμος*); the word for paper, which is a Chinese invention dating from the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., is *kägdä/kagda* in Uigur, being derived from Sogdian *k'γdyh*. The Sogdians were obviously the writing masters of the Turks. Miniature paintings have so far been found only in Turfan, the early centre of Middle Iranian, Chinese and Turkish culture. The oldest of these, which were probably painted in the 7th and 8th centuries, come from Middle Iranian books. Only the later ones, possibly of the 11th century, are taken from Uigur works, but scholars have not yet determined a definite Middle Iranian origin for them or reached any firm conclusions about their circulation amongst the Turks.

When they adopted the imperial title of Qaghan, the Kök-Türk chose the law of the steppe, but some of their titles prove their respect for Middle Iranian culture, as, for example:

OT *šad* < Sog. or Bactr. **šāδ* ∼ **χšāδ*
OT *yabγu* < Kušān *yavuga-*, from *yam-* "to lead" + *-uka*
OT *šadapit* < OP **satapati*
OT *išbara*, to be compared with Īśparaka, the name of a vassal Śaka in north west India at the beginning of our era.[1]

A most important title was *bäg* (< Sog. *bγ* "god, lord"), as was *t(e)gin* which is derived from the Kushān domain.

Apart from these titles of the Kök-Türk period and the technical terms in Buddhism and Manichaeism which we have mentioned, there are further loan words taken from everyday life which testify to the Turks' familiarity with the Sogdian language; among these are the Uigur words:

[1] P. Aalto, "Iranian contacts of the Turks in Pre-Islamic Times", in L. Ligeti (ed.), *Studia Turcica* (Budapest, 1971), pp. 29–37 (Bibliotheca orientalis hungarica 17); J. P. Asmussen, "Die Iranier in Zentralasien", *AO* XXVII (1963), pp. 119–27.

amari "innumerable" < Saka *ahumara*
qamaγ "all" < MP from Turfan *hm'g*
tümän "ten thousand" < NP *tumān*, and in other languages
t(a)su "a quarter", cf. MP from Turfan *ts(w)* "four"
äsän "sound" < MIr
šük "silent" < Sog. *šwk*
iγar "strong" < Sog. *γγ'r*
käd "much" < Sog. *k'δ*

The Uigur emperor, as we have seen (see above p. 620), took over from the Sogdians such symbols of authority as the diadem, the purple cloak and the royal throne. Other symbols of Middle Iranian origin include the jewel of a prince, called *y(a)lm(a)s*, < Pers. < Gk. ἀλάμας; the short veil of the Sasanian kings was used by the Tabghach nobility, who are depicted bearing gifts in the 5th century Buddhist cave temples in Yün-kang in north east China;[1] it is also found worn by the Ten Buddhist Kings of Purgatory and even by higher Uigur nobles. The lion, *arslan*, was both the emblem and title of every Uigur king, and as the animal was not found in Central Asia but in Iran, this indicates a Uigur borrowing from the Sasanian royalty. Similarly, the crescent in the Sasanian crown came to be given to Buddhist deities and Bodhisattvas in both Central Asia and China.

In the middle of the 9th century, the Uigur Qaghan of the steppe, with the intention of introducing the nomad Turks gradually to the sedentary life, gave orders for a number of Chinese as well as of Sogdians to build him a "rich town".[2] To a Central Asian people the concept of "town" was specifically Iranian, being represented by *kent* (< Sog. *knδh*), although it is also covered by a genuine Turkish word *balïq*. The MIr *kar* (Khotanese Saka *kara*, "fort, town") is to be found in the name Kāshghar. Even the Uigur word for "mortuary building" (*suburγan* < Sog. *zmrγ'n*) is of Sogdian origin.

The Sogdians, as the most important traders along the caravan route, acted as the middlemen providing the Uigurs with luxury goods, the names of which are frequently derived, at least indirectly, from Sogdian, such as

bor "raisin wine" < MP *bwr* = Gk. *botros*
bäkini "wine from millet" < Sog. *bγ'ny*

[1] T. Mizuno and T. Nagahiro, *Yung-kang, the Buddhist cave-temples of the fifth century A.D. in North China* XII.1 (Kyoto, 1954), pl. 37.

[2] G. J. Ramstedt, "Zwei uigurische Runeninschriften in der Nord-Mongolei", *Journal de la Société Finno-ougrienne* XXX (Helsinki, 1913–18), no. 3.

künčit "sesame" < MIr *kwnčt*
kürküm "saffron" < MIr *kwrkwm*
šäkär "sugar" < MIr *škr*

Trade along the Silk Road was of benefit to all the countries of Central Asia through which it passed because of transit taxes, to cope with which nomadic methods of barter were obviously inadequate. Consequently, Sogdian, as well as Chinese merchants, were responsible for the introduction of certain weights and measures as: Uig. *batman* "a weight" < MIr *ptm'n*; and *stir* "(stamped) coin" < Sog. *styr* < Gk. *στατήρ*.

This short chapter has dealt only with the linguistic and cultural influences on Old Turkish from Middle Iranian. For the reverse process the reader is referred to G. Doerfer's *Mongolische und türkische Elemente im Neupersischen*. There are a surprising number of Turkish borrowings found in New Persian, and some even in Middle Iranian. Still, it was Iranian peoples whose cultural influence was most widely felt in Central Asia at the beginning of the Middle Ages; the Turks were as yet comparative newcomers whose rôle it was to preserve and develop these cultural elements for a later time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The abbreviations used in the bibliographies and footnotes are listed below.

AA — *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (Beiblatt zum Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts) (Berlin)

AAWG — *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Göttingen)

AAntASH — *Acta antiqua academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)

AArchASH — *Acta archaeologica academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)

AB — *Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels)

Acta Iranica — Acta Iranica (encyclopédie permanente des études iraniennes) (Tehran–Liège–Leiden)

Aevum — *Aevum* (Rassegna di Scienze Storiche Linguistiche e Filologiche) (Milan)

AGWG — *Abhandlungen der (königlichen) Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Berlin)

AI — *Ars Islamica = Ars Orientalis* (Ann Arbor, Mich.)

AION — *Annali: Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (s.l. sezione linguistica; n.s. new series) (Naples)

AJSLL — *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* (Chicago)

AKM — *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Leipzig)

AMI — *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (old series 9 vols 1929–38; new series 1968–) (Berlin)

Anatolia — *Anatolia* (revue annuelle d'archéologie) (Ankara)

ANS — American Numismatic Society

ANSMN — *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* (New York)

ANSNNM — American Numismatic Society Numismatic Notes and Monographs (New York)

ANSNS — American Numismatic Society Numismatic Studies (New York)

Antiquity — *Antiquity* (a periodical review of archaeology edited by Glyn Daniel) (Cambridge)

AO — *Acta Orientalia* (ediderunt Societates Orientales Batava Danica Norvegica Svedica) (Copenhagen)

AOAW — *Anzeiger der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)

AOH — *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)

APAW — *Abhandlungen der Preussischen (Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Berlin)

Apollo — *Apollo* (The magazine of the arts) (London)

ArOr — *Archiv Orientální* (Quarterly Journal of African, Asian and Latin American Studies) (Prague)

Artibus Asiae — *Artibus Asiae* (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) (Dresden, Ascona)

Asia Major	*Asia Major* (a journal devoted to the study of the languages, arts and civilizations of the Far East and Central Asia) old series, 11 vols (Leipzig, 1923–35); (a British journal of Far Eastern studies) new series, 19 vols (London, 1949–75)
ASIR	*Archaeological Survey of India*. Reports made during the years 1862– by Alexander Cunningham, 23 vols. Simla–Calcutta, 1871–87.
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Baltimore, Maryland)
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* (Athens–Paris)
BCMA	*The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, Ohio)
BEFEO	*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* (Hanoi-Paris)
Berytus	*Berytus* (archaeological studies published by the Museum of Archaeology and the American University of Beirut) (Copenhagen)
BMQ	*British Museum Quarterly* (London)
BSO(A)S	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies* (University of London)
Byzantion	*Byzantion* (Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines) (Brussels)
CAH	*The Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 vols; 1st edition 1924–39 (Cambridge) (Revised edition 1970–)
Caucasica	*Caucasica* (Zeitschrift für die Erforschung der Sprachen und Kulturen des Kaukasus und Armeniens) 10 fascs (Leipzig, 1924–34)
CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* (Oxford)
CIIr	*Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (London)
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (Paris)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Paris, Louvain)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna)
DOAW	*Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)
East and West	*East and West* (Quarterly published by the Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Orient) (Rome)
EI	*Epigraphia Indica* (Calcutta)
Eos	*Eos* (Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum) (Bratislava–Warsaw)
EPRO	Études préliminaries aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain (Leiden)
Eranos	*Eranos* (Acta Philologica Suecana) (Uppsala)
ERE	*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 13 vols (Edinburgh, 1908–21)
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig, Berlin)
Georgica	*Georgica* (a journal of Georgian and Caucasian studies) nos. 1–5 (London, 1935–7)
GJ	*The Geographical Journal* (London)

Gnomon	*Gnomon* (Kritische Zeitschrift für die gesamte klassische Altertumswissenschaft) (Munich)
Hellenica	*Hellenica* (receuil d'épigraphie de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques) (Paris)
Historia	*Historia* (Journal of Ancient History) (Wiesbaden)
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.)
HO	*Handbuch der Orientalistik*, ed. B. Spuler (Leiden–Cologne)
HOS	*Harvard Oriental Series* (Cambridge, Mass.)
IA	*Iranica Antiqua* (Leiden)
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal* (The Hague)
IndAnt	*The Indian Antiquary*, 62 vols (Bombay, 1872–1933)
Iran	*Iran* (journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies) (London–Tehran)
Iraq	*Iraq* (journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq) (London)
JA	*Journal Asiatique* (Paris)
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New York)
JASB	*Journal (and proceedings) of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta)
JASBB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society Bombay Branch* (Bombay)
JCOI	*Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, 29 vols (Bombay, 1922–35)
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (New Haven, Conn.)
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Leiden)
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies* (London)
JMBRAS	*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Singapore)
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
JNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* (Bombay)
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London)
JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies* (London)
Kairos	*Kairos* (Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie) (Salzburg)
Klio	*Klio* (Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte) (Berlin)
Kuml	*Kuml* (Aarbog for Jysk Arkaeologisk Selskab) (Aarhus)
KSIIMK	*Kratkie soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta istorii materialnoĭ kultury AN SSR* (Moscow)
KZ	*Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, begründet von Adalbert Kuhn* (Göttingen)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MDAFA	Mémoires de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan (Paris)
Mesopotamia	*Mesopotamia* (Rivista di Archeologia, Faculta di Littere e filosofia) (University of Turin)
MMAB	*The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (old series 1905–42; new series 1942–) (New York)

MMP	*Monuments et Mémoires* (publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres) (Fondation Eugène Piot, Paris)
Le Muséon	*Le Muséon* (Revue d'Études Orientales) (Louvain-Paris)
Museum	*Museum* (art magazine edited by the Tokyo National Museum) (Tokyo)
NC	*Numismatic Chronicle* (London)
NGWG	*Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Göttingen)
Numismatica	*Numismatica* (Rome)
OLZ	*Orientalische Literaturzeitung* (Berlin–Leipzig)
Oriens	*Oriens* (journal of the International Society for Oriental Research) (Leiden)
Orientalia	*Orientalia* (a quarterly published by the Faculty of Ancient Oriental Studies, Pontifical Biblical Institute) new series (Rome)
Pauly	Pauly, A. *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (ed. G. Wissowa) (Stuttgart, 1894–)
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy* (London)
Philologus	*Philologus* (Zeitschrift für das klassische Altertum) (Stolberg, etc., now Berlin)
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis* (ed. R. Gaffin and F. Nau) (Paris)
RAA	*Revue des arts asiatiques* (Paris)
RAC	*Reallexicon fur Antike und Christentum* (ed. T. Klauser) (Stuttgart, 1950–)
REA	*Revue des études arméniennes*, nouvelle séric (Paris)
Religion	*Religion* (A Journal of Religion and Religions) (Newcastle upon Tyne)
RGG	*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., 6 vols (Tübingen, 1927–32); 3rd ed., 7 vols (Tübingen, 1957–65)
RHR	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (Paris)
RIN	*Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienzi Affini* (Milan)
RN	*Revue Numismatique* (Paris)
RSO	*Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (Rome)
Saeculum	*Saeculum* (Jahrbuch fur Universalgeschichte) (Freiburg–Munich)
SBE	Sacred Books of the East (Oxford)
SCBO	Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford)
Semitica	*Semitica* (Cahiers publiés par l'Institut d'Études Sémitiques de l'Université de Paris) (Paris)
SHAW	*Sitzungsberichte der heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Heidelberg)
SPA	*A Survey of Persian Art*, ed. A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman, 6 vols (Text pp. 1–2817) (Oxford–London–New York, 1938–39); repr. 12 vols (Tokyo, 1964–65); no vol. XIII; vol. XIV *New Studies 1938–1960* (Text pp. 2879–3205) (Oxford–London, 1967); vol. XV *Bibliography of Pre-Islamic Persian Art to 1938* (cols 1–340), Reprint of *Index to Text Volumes I–III (i–vi)*

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SPAW *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen (Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Berlin)

StIr *Studia Iranica* (Leiden)

Sumer *Sumer* (journal of archaeology and history in Iraq) (Baghdad)

SWAW *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener (Österreichischen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)

Syria *Syria* (Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie) (Paris)

TITAKE *Trudi Iuzhno-Turkmenistanskoi Archeologischeskoi Kimplexnoi Ekspeditsii*, 6 vols (Moscow, 1949–58)

TM *Travaux et mémoires* (Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilization de Byzance) (Paris)

T'oung Pao *T'oung Pao* (Archives concernant l'histoire, les langues, la géographie, l'ethnographie et les arts de l'Asie orientale) (Leiden)

TPS *Transactions of the Philological Society* (London)

VDI *Vestnik drevneĭ istorii* (Moscow)

WVDOG *Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (Leipzig)

WZKM *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)

YCS *Yale Classical Studies* (New Haven, Conn.)

ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* (Berlin)

ZDMG *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden)

ZN *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* (Berlin)

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CHAPTER I

1. *Sources*

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3. *Seleucid Iran*

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4. *Political History*

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CHAPTER 2

(a) Classical authorities

Note. A full bibliography of Classical notices on Parthia is liable to be cumbersome, since the brief references are scattered through the pages of longer works primarily concerned with other topics. Only the principal authorities are listed here. A selection of more detailed references will be found in the footnotes. Most of these texts are printed in numerous editions.

(i) Greek

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(ii) Latin

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Tacitus, *Annals*.

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*Wroth, *BMC Parthia*.

CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 4

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of sources on Sassanian Iran, for which consult *Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 50–83.[1] Rather, it is first an overall guide to bibliographies on specific subjects, and second a chronological survey of the most important sources for the political history of Sassanian Iran.

All Sassanian inscriptions will be contained in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* published in London and now in progress. A preliminary glossary has been prepared by P. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes*, London, 1972 (*CIIr* Supplementary Series 1). The two basic works on the great inscription of Shāpūr are M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran. Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago, 1953) and *Maricq, "Res Gestae". For other inscriptions the main publication is E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli* (Berlin, 1924).

Sassanian numismatics are conveniently summarized by R. Göbl, *Sassanian Numismatics* (Brunswick, 1971) where an extensive bibliography on the subject may be found.

Seals and clay sealings may be found in the relevant volumes of the *CIIr*. Bibliographical references to the inscriptions on them, and on all Iranian inscriptions from the Sassanian period, may be found in *Henning, "Mitteliranisch".

Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature is surveyed by J. Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier* (Leipzig, 1956) p. 141. In this book the bibliographies of editions, and studies on each of them, will aid the reader.

Arabic and Persian sources on the Sassanians are discussed by Christensen, *op. cit*, pp. 59–74, and a full bibliography is in B. Spuler, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1952) pp. 535–64.

Nothing has replaced the remarks of Christensen *op. cit.* on Greek and Latin sources (pp. 73–7), Armenian sources (pp. 77–9) and Syriac sources (pp. 80–3).

The overall history of the succession of Sassanian rulers is covered by Ṭabarī (see especially *Nöldeke, *Tabari*) and by *Firdausī. Although other works, such as the Arabic text of al-Tha'ālibī, edited and translated into French by H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses* (Paris, 1900), contain information not found in Ṭabarī or Firdausī, those two are the most important general histories upon which many others are based. Firdausī, of course, contains many fanciful stories, but cannot be ignored if used with caution.

For the beginning of the Sassanian dynasty, we have a plethora of material. The most important Classical source is Agathias, edited in a recent publication by R. Keydell (Berlin, 1967). All sources are surveyed in G. Walser and T. Pékary, *Die Krise des römischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1962). A summary of events, with selected translations from various sources is given in J. Gagé, *La montée des Sassanides* (Paris, 1964).

After the death of Shāpūr I, there follows a dearth of information until

[1] See also pp. 359ff. and 1269ff. in the present volume.

the time of Shāpūr II. For his reign we have the long account of his wars with the Romans by Ammianus Marcellinus, edited and trans. into English by J. C. Rolfe (LCL, London, 1935).

In the 4th century, for the first time, we have the Syriac acts of the Persian martyrs which, in addition to religious matters, contain items of information significant for political history. G. Wiesner has studied these accounts in his *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II*, *AAWG* LXVII (1967). The Syriac chronicles, while occasionally having items of interest to Iran, are generally disappointing as sources for the political history of Iran under the Sassanians.

In the reign of Yazdagird I and throughout the 5th century the Armenian sources begin to throw light on Sassanian history, and they give us information in addition to the standard texts of Ṭabarī and Firdausī. For the early part of the century the chronicles of Lazar of P'arp and of Ełišē, although concerned with the history of Armenia, are also of value for Iranian history. Translated into French under the auspices of V. Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie* II (Paris, 1869), pp. 183–368, both translations need to be controlled by the newer and best editions of each: Lazar, *Patmut'iun Hayoc*, ed. Ter-Mkrtzean (Tiflis, 1904), and Ełišē, *Vasn Vardanac ew Hayoc Paterazmin*, ed. E. Ter-Minasean (Erevan, 1957). Priscus, ed. L. Dindorff, *Historici Graeci Minores* I (Leipzig, 1870), pp. 275–352, or ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* IV (Paris, 1868) pp. 29–110, has interesting information about the reign of Pērōz.

For the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th, especially the reigns of Kavād and the beginning of Khusrau I we have detailed account of the wars between Persians and Byzantines in Procopius; *History of the Wars*, ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing (LCL, London, 1961). Agathias, mentioned above, is also an important source for the reign of Khusrau I.

The Mazdakite movement has evoked two books, one by A. Christensen, *Le règne du roi Kawādh I et le communisme Mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925) and O. Klima, *Mazdak* (Prague, 1957). The Syriac chronicle of Joshua the Stylite, ed. and tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882) is especially useful for Kavād's reign, although many Byzantine authors writing in Greek are just as important for the events of the 6th and 7th centuries.[1] The Corpus Scriptorum Historicorum Byzantinorum, published in the first half of the 19th century at Bonn, contains the texts of relevant authors.

For the last century of Sassanian rule we have a number of valuable chronicles such as the so-called Syriac "Anonymous of Guidi", first edited by I. Guidi in the CSCO series 3, vol. IV, and translated by T. Nöldeke in *SWAW* CXXVIII (1893), no. ix. For a detailed bibliography of this period see P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* I (Paris, 1951), pp. 332ff.

For the 7th century the massive number of Arabic sources completely changes our view of the history of Iran, bringing it from the shadows into the full light of detailed chronicles. The *Futūḥ al-buldān* of al-Balādhurī, ed. M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1866) and translated into English by P. K. Hitti,

[1] See also bibliography to Ch. 27 (*b*).

The Origins of the Islamic State, part 1 (New York, 1916), part 2 by F. Murgotten (New York, 1924) is perhaps the most valuable source on the Arab conquests. For the Islamic sources see Spüler, *op. cit.*

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CHAPTER 21

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CHAPTER 32(*a*)

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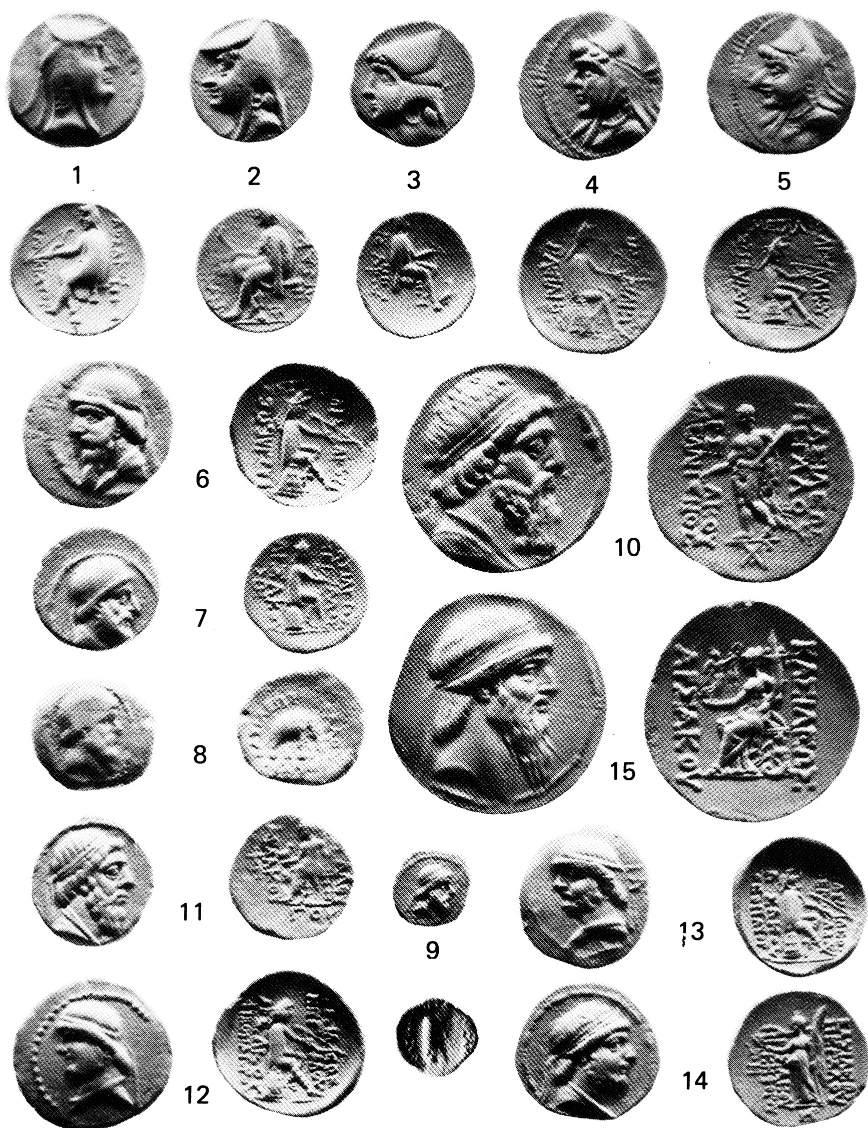
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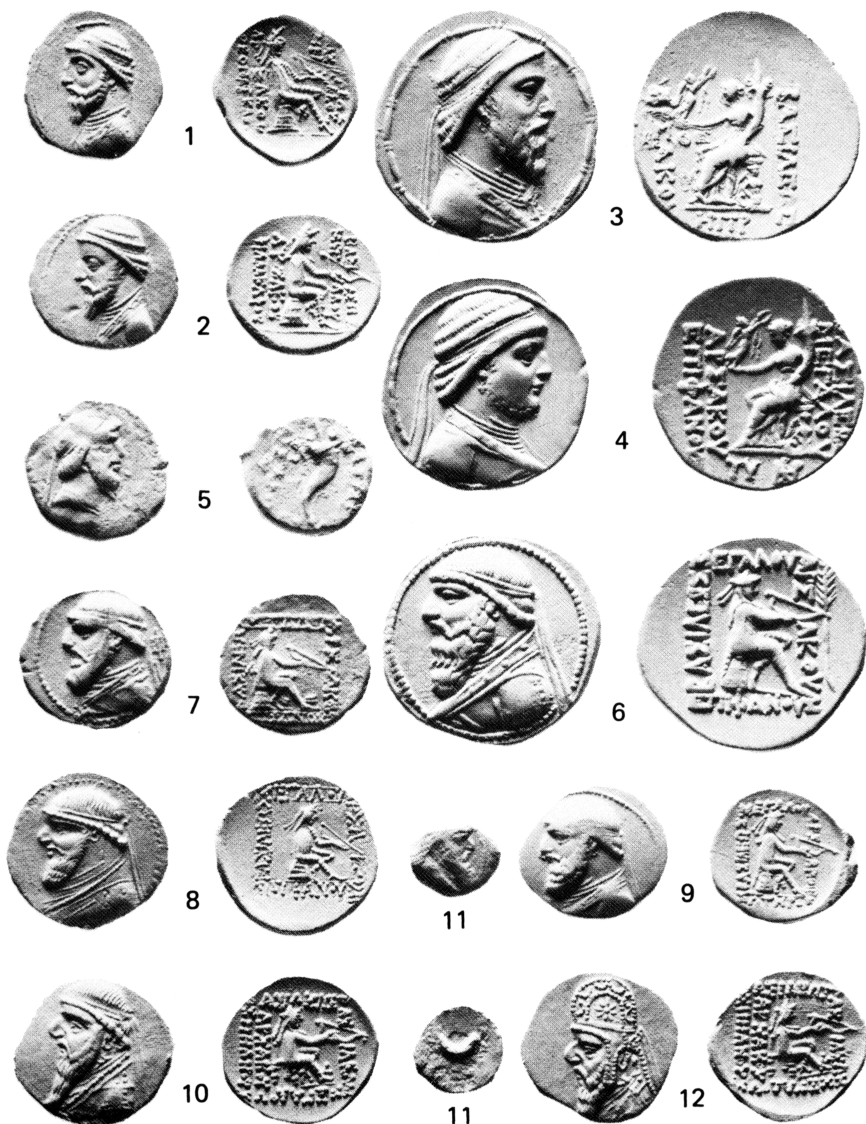
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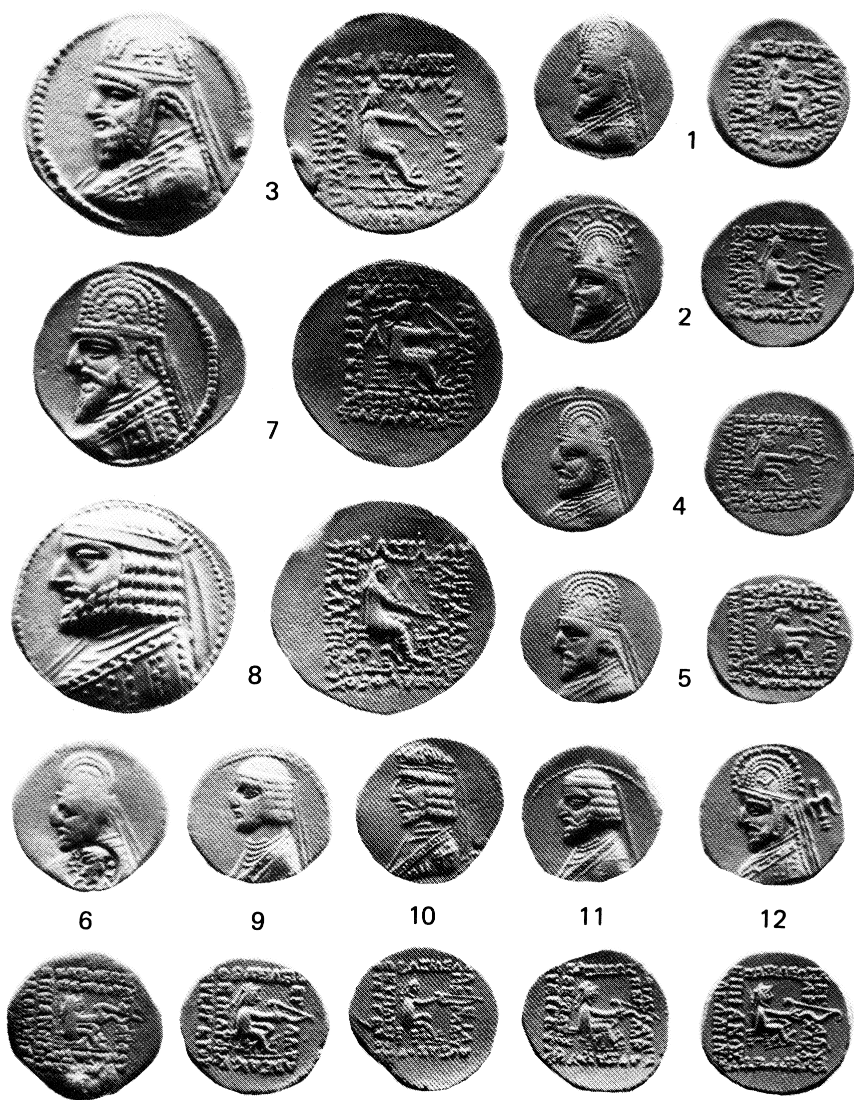
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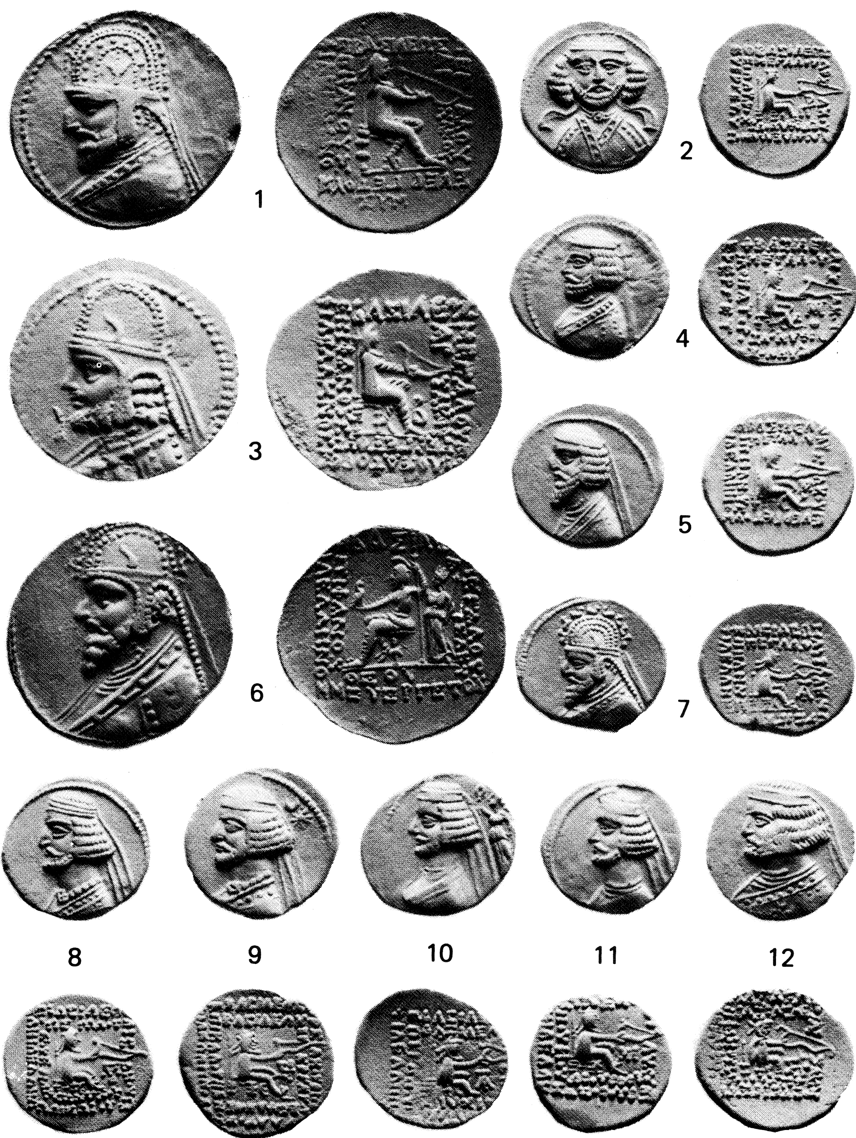
1 Parthian coins.



2 Parthian coins.



3 Parthian coins.



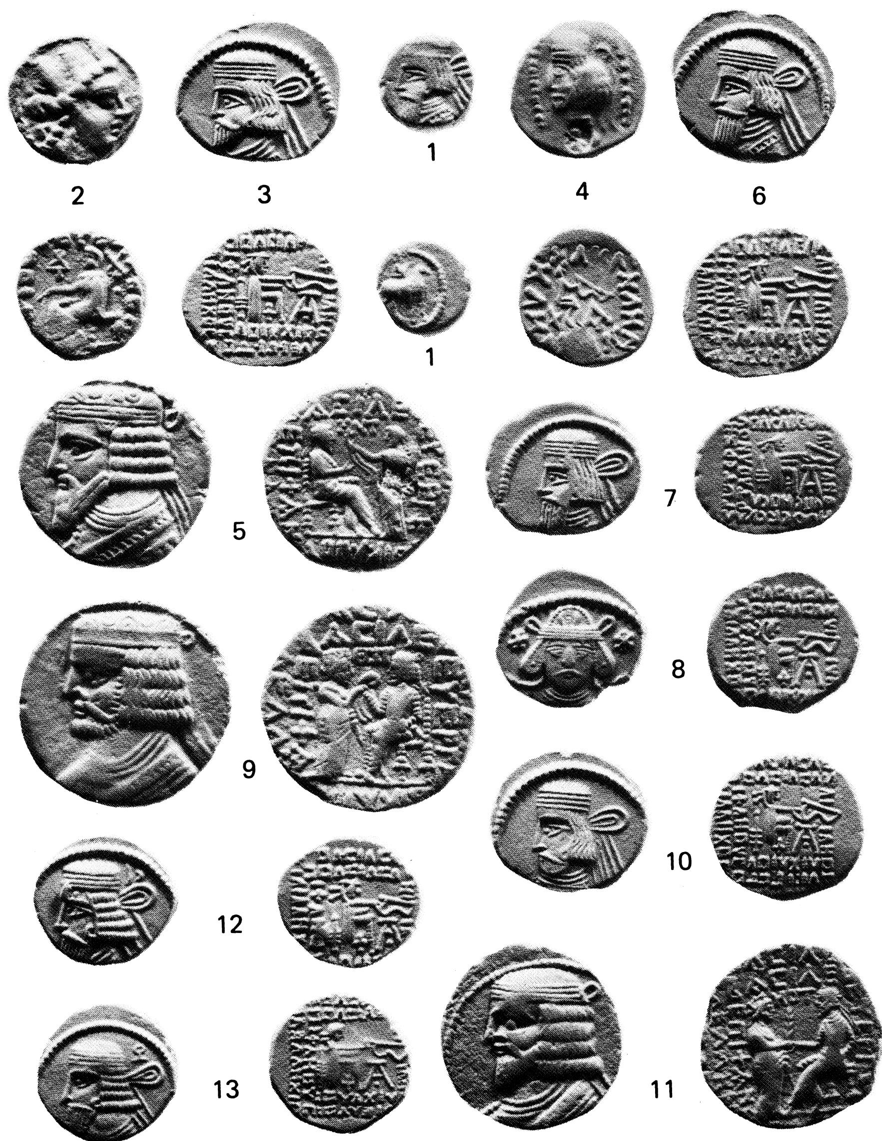
4 Parthian coins.



5 Parthian coins.



6 Parthian coins.



7 Parthian coins.



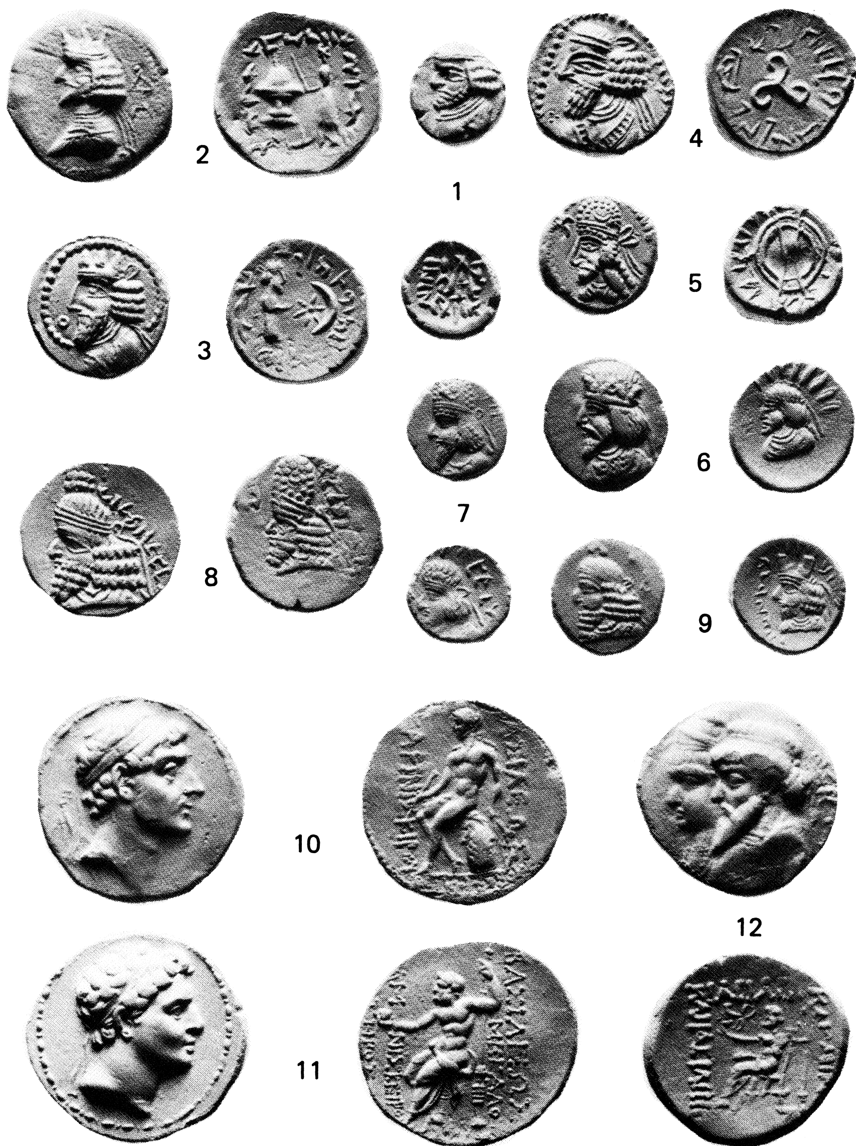
8 Parthian coins.



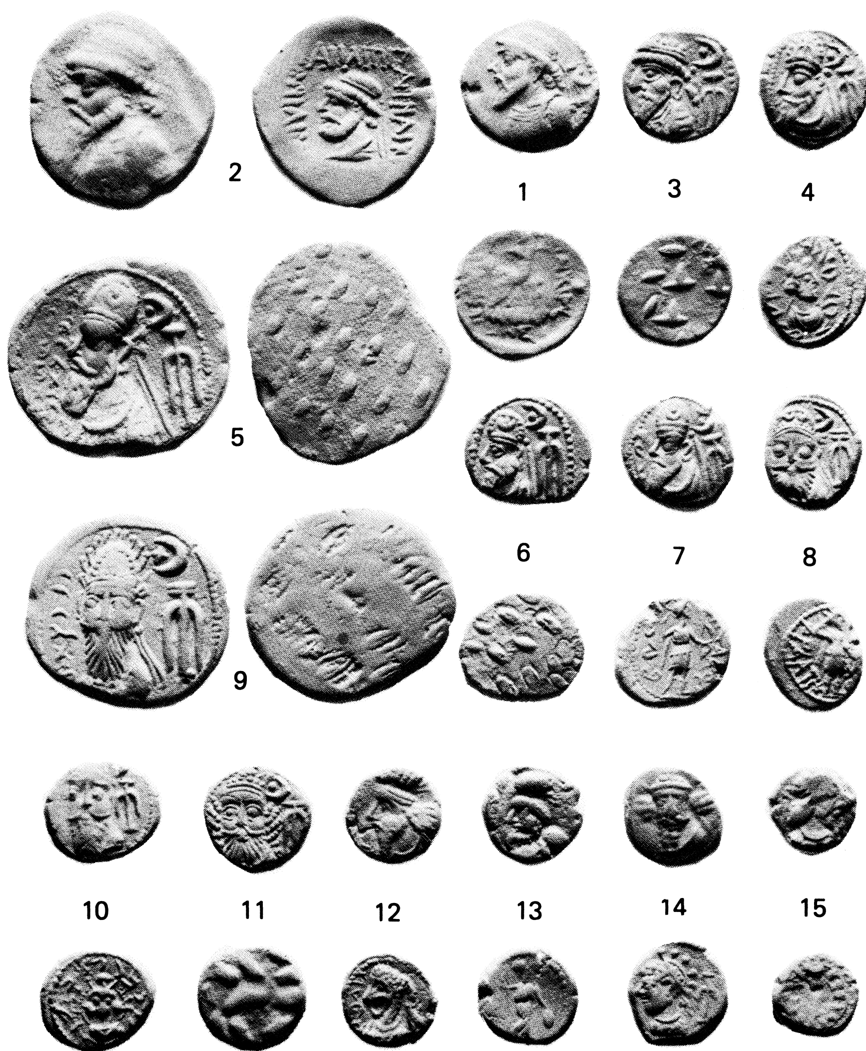
9 Parthian coins.



10 Coins of Persis.



11 Coins of Persis and Elymais.



12 Coins of Elymais.



1





3



2







4





6



5





13 Coins of Characene.















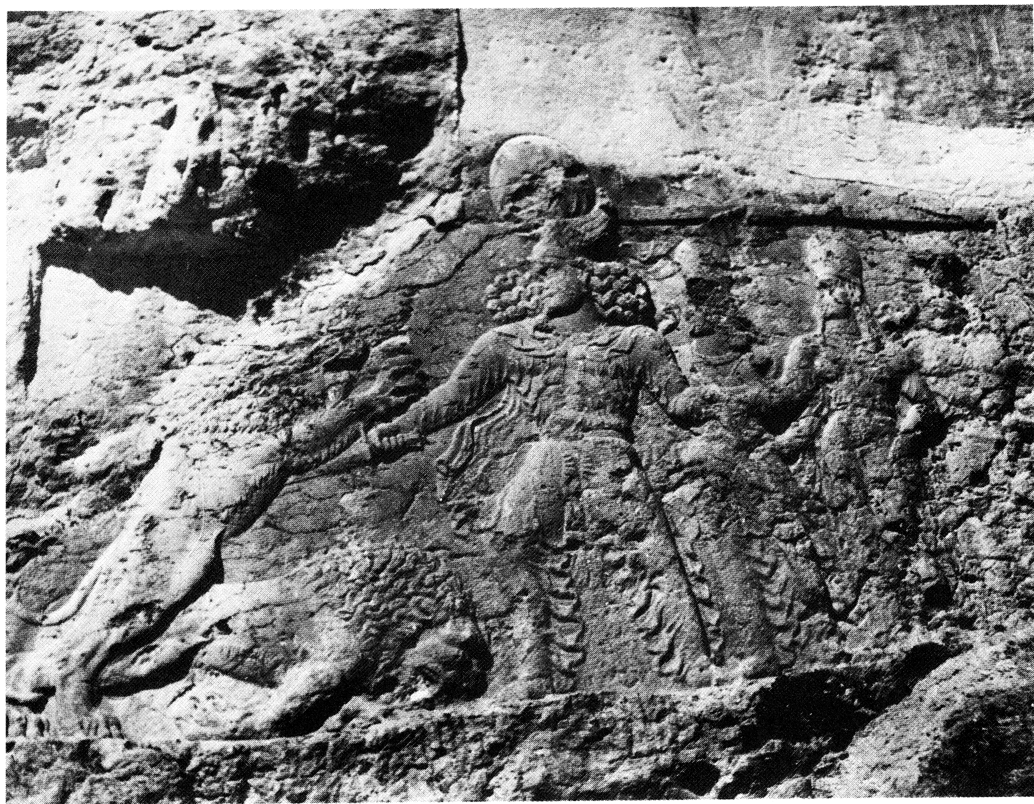





14 Coins of Characene.



15 Naqsh-i Rajab, Sasanian relief. The investiture of Ardashīr.



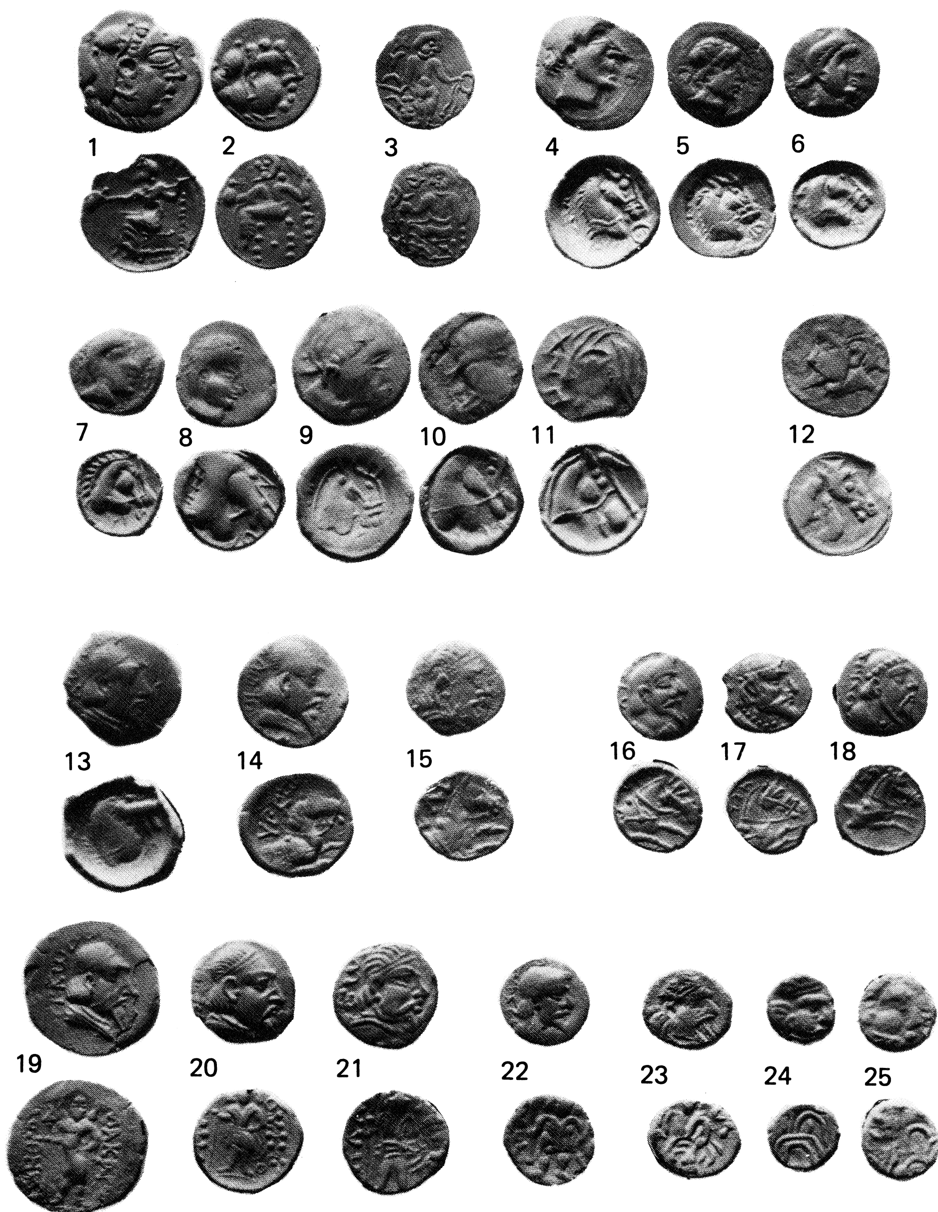
16 Sar Mashad. Sasanian relief. Bahhrām II killing a lion while protecting his queen.



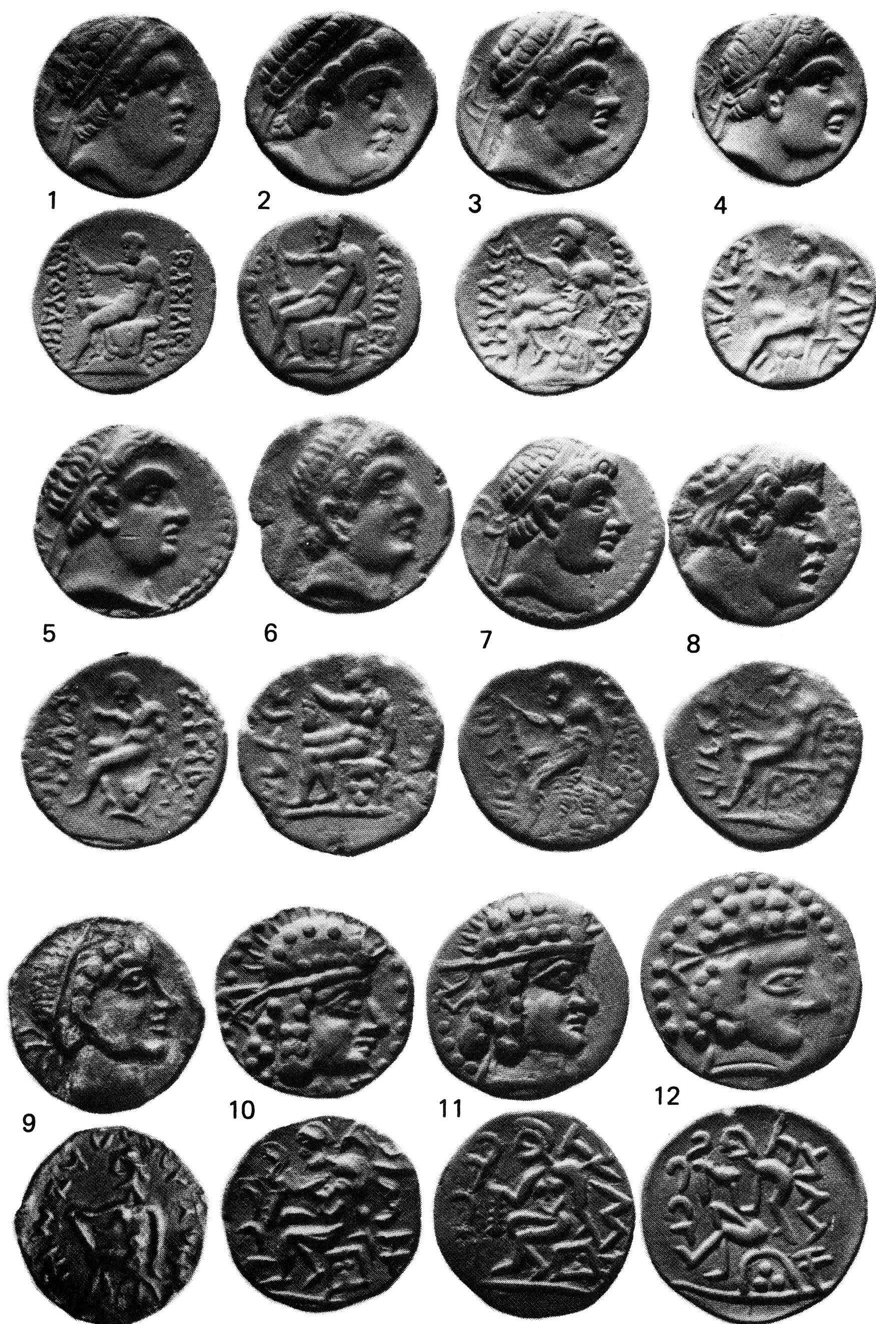
17 Silver-gilt plate, Shāpūr II hunting boar, 4th century A.D., diam. 23·9 cm.



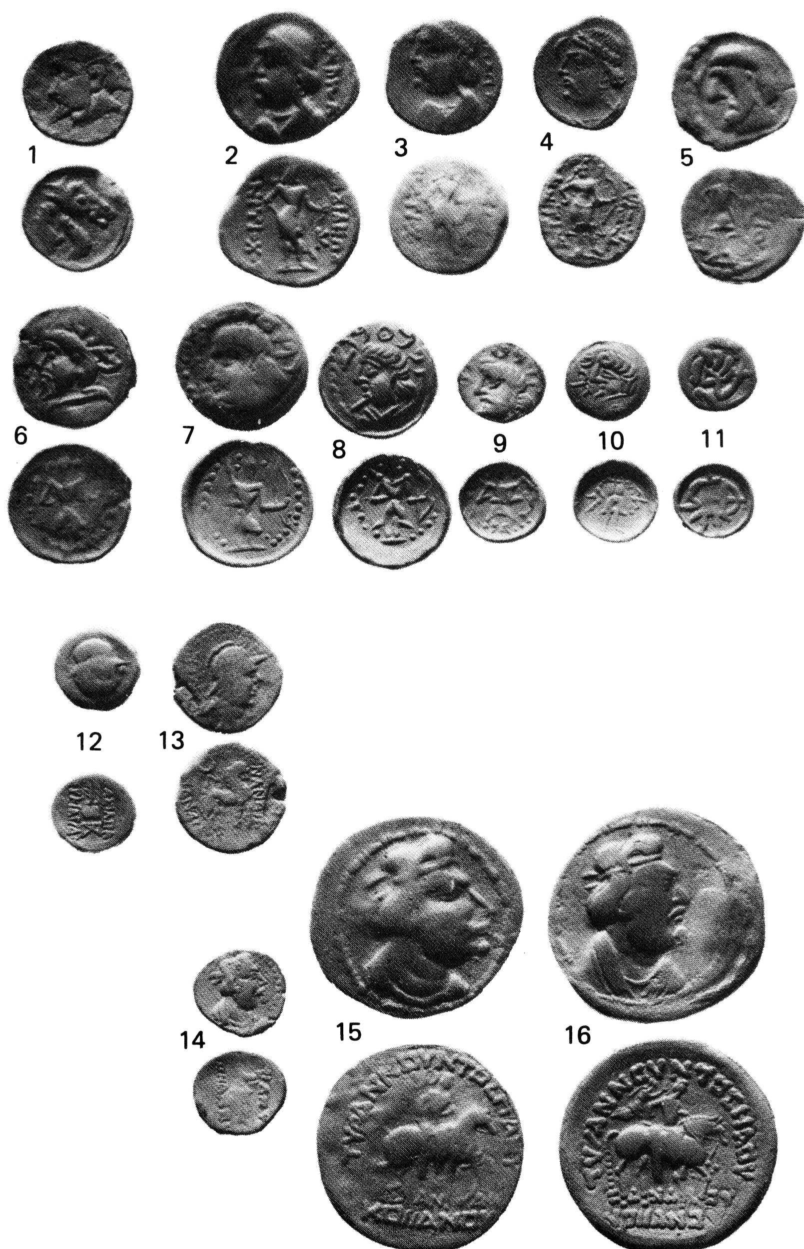
18 Silver-gilt, niello dish. Pērōz or Khusrau I hunting ibex. 6th century A.D., diam. 22 cm.



19 Early Sogdian coins.



20 Early Sogdian imitations of Euthydemus tetradrachms.



21 (Above) Sogdian archer type; (below) Eucratides derivatives.



22 Heliocles imitations.



1



2



3









4



5



6





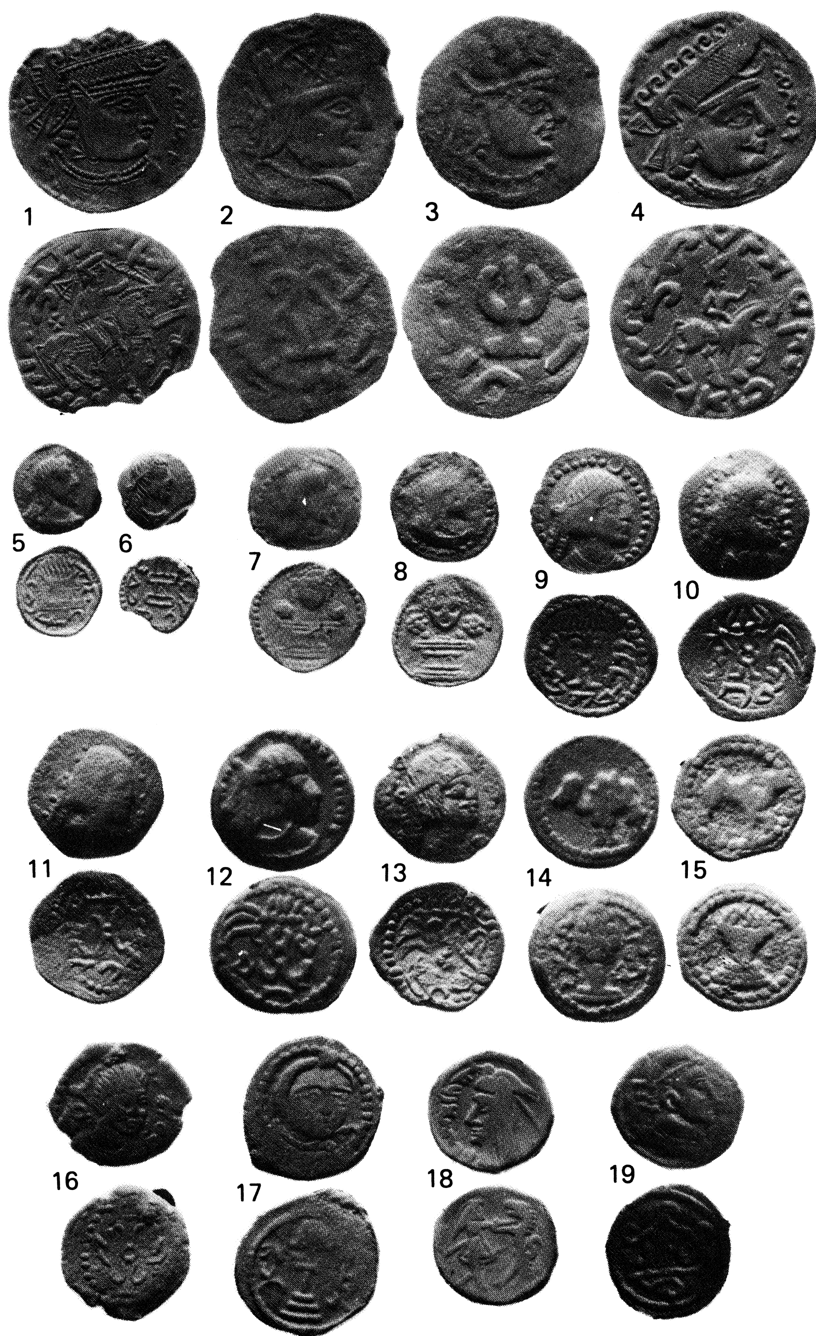






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23 Early Chorasmian coins.



24 Chorasmian and Sogdian coins.

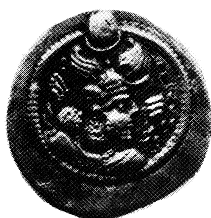


25 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.



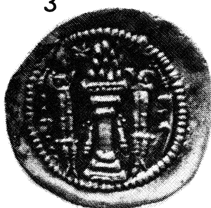
26 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.





1 2 3



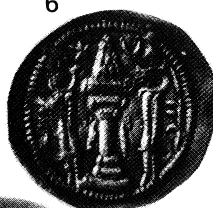






4 5 6








7 8




27 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.



28 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.



29 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.



30 Coins of the Sasanian kings, showing their crowns.



31 Kushano-Sasanian coins and Arab imitations.



32 Hunnish imitations of the Sasanian drachm-type.


(*a*)

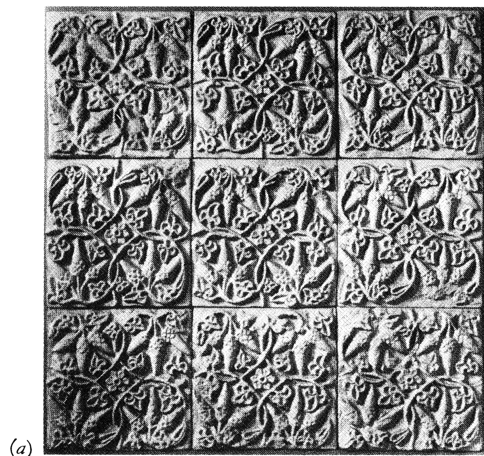

(*b*)

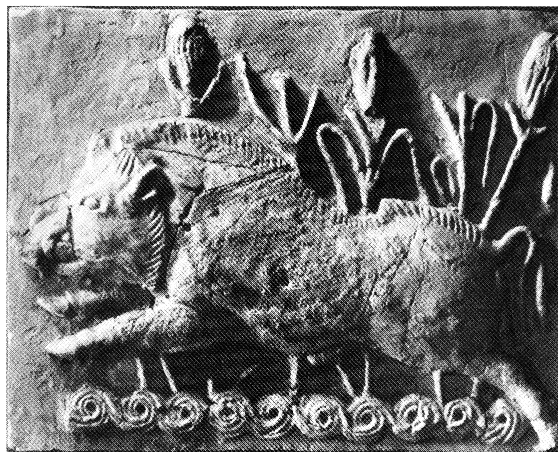

(*c*)

33 Hatra, (*a*) marble tomb-statuette, 2nd century A.D.
(*b*) Vault-stone with relief of a moon-goddess. Sandstone, 2nd century A.D.

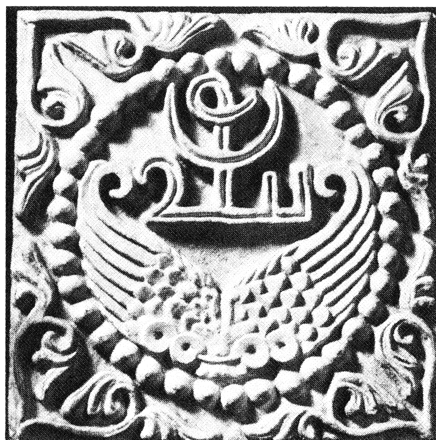


34 Archer on horseback, burned clay, Iraq or Syria, 1st–3rd centuries A.D.


(*a*)


(*b*)


(*c*)


(*d*)


(*e*)

35 Ctesiphon, (*a*) plate of wall-plaster, 6th century A.D.
(*b*) plate of wall-plaster with



(*a*)





(*b*)

36 (*a*) Bronze openwork belt-buckle from the Caucasus. Scythian, *c.* 5th century B.C., l. 5·4 ins.

(*b*) Gold stater, in imitation of the coinage of Alexander the Great, struck in Colchis, Seleucid-Parthian period (enlarged).


(*a*)


(*b*)

37 Nimrud Dagh, west terrace, (*a*) sandstone relief showing Antiochus (left) with Achaemenian tiara and Apollo/Mithra (right) with a rayed tiara. (*b*) Guardian lion,



38 Nimrud Dagh, east terrace, row of colossal statues, limestone. From left to right: eagle, Antiochus, Tyche of Commagene, Zeus/Ahura Mazda, Apollo/Mithra, Hercules/Verethragna/Ares, eagle. The statues have been much damaged, largely by earthquakes.



(*a*)



(*b*)

39 (*a*) Head of a bronze statue of Anāhīt/Aphrodite, from Satala, western Armenia. (*b*) Three silver tetradrachms of Tigranes the Great, from different mints.



(*a*)



(*b*)

40 Jvari church of the Holy Cross, Mtskheta, Georgia, *c.* 600 A.D. (*a*) View of exterior, showing series of reliefs above windows. (*b*) Relief showing Kobul Strategos being blessed by St Stephen, with an inscription in Georgian uncials

(*a*)





41 (*a*) Echmiadzin, Hripsimé church, 618 A.D.
(*b*) Dvin, ruins of patriarchal palace. Carved stone showing grape harvest, 6th century A.D.



42 Tun-huang, Kansu province, detail of mural in cave-temple 322. Bodhisattva in Sino-Iranian style. Second half of 7th century A.D.



43 Tun-huang, Kansu province, detail of mural in cave-temple 420. Bodhisattva in Sino-Indian style (cf. the subject of Plate 42). Late 6th century A.D.



44 Stone statue of a bodhisattva from Yün-kang, Shansi province. Late 5th century A.D. Height 146 cm.



45 Painted pottery figure of a Central Asian huntsman in Chinese employ, engaged in controlling his cheetah. From the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai at Ch'ien-hsien, Sian, Shensi province. Dated to 706 A.D. Height 31·5 cm.



46 White porcellaneous bowl, copying a metal or wooden vessel studded with medallions and mounted precious stones, in west-Iranian style. Found at Han-sen-chai, Shensi province, in a tomb dated to 667 A.D. Height 23 cm.



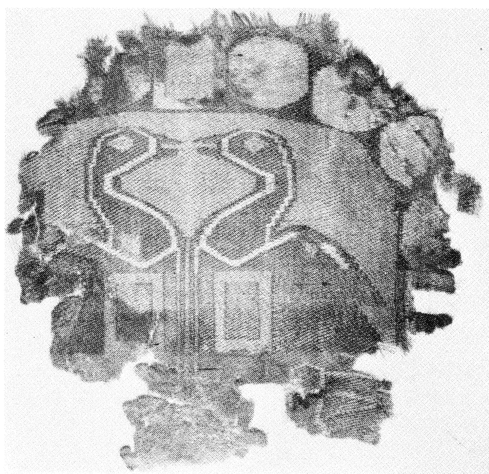
47 Chinese silver-gilt cup in the Iranian style. Each facet of the sides frames a musician or an entertainer dressed in the Central Asian fashion. Found at Ho-chia, Dian, Shensi province. Mid 8th century A.D.



(*a*)



(*b*)



(*c*)

48 Fragments of textile excavated at Turfan in eastern Central Asia (*a*) from a tomb dated to 551 A.D., with ornament of traditional Chinese type. (*b*) and (*c*) From tombs of about 700 A.D., with confronted animal motifs set in a beaded oval, in the Iranian style.